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THE THEATRE

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THE THEATRE

ITS DEVELOPMENT IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND, AND A HISTORY OF ITS GREEK AND LATIN ORIGINS

BY CHARLES HASTINGS

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM
MONSIEUR VICTORIEN SARDOU
OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

Authorised Translation
BY FRANCES A. WELBY

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TO

FRANCIS BROOKS, Esq., M.A. (Oxford)

AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, BRISTOL

IN TOKEN OF REGARD AND ESTEEM

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INTRODUCTION

In undertaking the study of the Theatre, I have set aside all pretensions to the rôle of critic; nor have I ventured to take my stand on any special plea of learning; nevertheless, I have set before myself a very ambitious aim—that of earning for this work the reputation of an original, useful, and practical text-book.

It has always surprised me that among the many works—whether English or French—that relate to the Drama, there should be no history, or rather historical outline, of the Theatre: by which I mean an account of the events that follow, with scrupulous regard to chronological order, from the days of Thespis to our own time (at least in France and England).

I asked myself why, in our Colleges and Universities, there should not be manuals of Dramatic History as well as of History or of Literature in general. Since the French Theatre has from the sixteenth century to our own time been illustrated by the genius, or talent, of the most powerful writers and *littérateurs*, it seems to me that one ought consequently to devote more time to

the study of the Drama in educational centres. I should be happy if this book could find its place as the first of a series destined to fill this *lacuna*.

In the exercise of my functions as Lecturer, I have often been struck with the ignorance of students in matters of dramatic literature. In France, young people are apt to think that Shakespeare is practically the only dramatic genius, and even the only great English dramatic author; on the other hand, English students refuse to recognise any authors other than Corneille, Racine, Molière, and Victor Hugo, in the French Theatre. The concluding chapter of this book, which enumerates the principal plays of the immense modern repertory that succeed each other night after night at the Comédie-Française, will, I hope, serve to disperse these mistaken notions.

Having imposed upon myself the rule of not trespassing into the department of criticism proper, I am compelled to make a merely historical survey of the Theatre between 1642 and 1900. For the rest, the full study of the Drama in this second period will be matter for a second volume.

I take this opportunity of returning my thanks to the eminent Academicians MM. Le Vicomte de Bornier, François Coppée, Jules Claretie, Comte A. de Mun, Victorien Sardou; and in England, to the great literary authorities Dr. Richard

Garnett, Sidney Lee, A. W. Ward, and others, who have encouraged me by their sympathy to persevere in my self-allotted task.

Further, I have to thank the Librarians in Paris and in London—and more particularly those gentlemen at the excellent Museum Library of Bristol, whose exceeding courtesy has largely simplified my labour of research.

This edition has been translated into English for me by Miss Frances A. Welby. She has also supplied an Index, and with the assistance of Mr. R. Greentree (Balliol College) has made some corrections in the classical portion, and has throughout endeavoured to correct the misprints in the French edition, some of which were pointed out in the *Athenæum* and other reviews.

I have also availed myself of several suggestions from the eminent literary critics, Mr. Joseph Knight and Mr. A. B. Walkley.

CHARLES HASTINGS,
Late Lecturer at University College, Bristol.

LONDON, *September* 1901.

LETTER FROM M. SARDOU, DE L'ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE

Paris, le 20 août 1900.

Cher Monsieur,

J'ai lu les épreuves de votre ouvrage et je m'empresse de vous dire tout le bien que j'en pense : C'est très intéressant, très documenté, et vous savez dire beaucoup de choses en peu de mots ! ! mérite rare.

Je ne saurais trop me féliciter de vous avoir encouragé à poursuivre un travail qui vous a demandé de si longues recherches et qui ne sera pas seulement apprécié par les étudiants des Collèges et Universités, mais aussi par les érudits et les gens du monde curieux de l'art Théâtral.

Je suis persuadé qu'il sera aussi bien accueilli en Angleterre qu'en France. J'y vois une garantie de vos nouveaux succès à Londres comme Conférencier de la Littérature dramatique, rôle auquel, d'ailleurs, vous étiez déjà admirablement préparé par votre connaissance parfaite de la langue Française.

Je m'intéresse trop vivement à une entreprise destinée à resserrer les liens d'amitié entre les deux pays, pour ne pas contribuer à la réussite de vos travaux dans la mesure de mes moyens d'action.

Agréez, cher Monsieur, mes salutations les plus amicales.

VICTORIEN SARDOU,
de l'Académie Française.

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THE THEATRE IN GREECE

I

THE EARLY TRAGEDIES AND THE SATYRIC DRAMA

Origins of Tragedy: the Festival of Dionysus—The Primitive Stage—Thespis and the first Tragedies—The Poet-Actors—The Lenaeum—Fifth century B.C.—Predecessors of Aeschylus—The Satyric Drama; its character—Pratinas, creator of the Tetralogy.

In Greece, religion was the cradle of the drama. Among ancient peoples, the theatre was not only an amusement for the eyes, and a prime distraction for the mind, it had a more vital, more national function. Proceeding at once from patriotism and from the religious feeling, it derived its inspirations from the memory of the heroes who had fought in some noble cause, and from the traditions relating to the divinities who protected the city. Hence the custom which obtained from the seventh century B.C. in certain Greek cities, of placing every year, at a pre-determined time, upon the *agora* or market-place, an altar destined to receive the sacrifices offered to the hero of the locality, while the choir of priests chanted a hymn, termed *The Goat-Song* or *Tragedy*. In the sixth century, the most popular of all the religious festivals was that of Dionysus, and the principal feature of this cere-

mony consisted in the chanting of an ode, or dithyramb, by a chorus of satyrs.[1] The chant was preceded by an account of the sufferings of the god, related by a poet-singer. The poet was called the *Narrator*, and his recital, in great part improvisation, was acted as well as sung, the chorus repeating some of his words, or taking up a known refrain.

Throughout this period the theatre was simply represented by a circular enclosure, or orchestra, in the centre of which stood the chorus. The spectators were placed round the circle. Little by little the dithyramb reached its perfection. The songs of the chorus became true lyric poems, and ended with a lament, resembling the climax. Other important modifications followed. The narrator becomes the actor, and henceforward plays the part of hero, of messenger, thus bringing to the chorus new subjects, which admit of variations in their chant. Improvisation in its turn gives place to action, imperfect it is true, but regular. Finally, dialogue comes into existence, as presented under the form of an alternate chant in which the actor and chorus respond, or exchange their plaints; in some sort an analogy with the *versicles* and *responses* still used in the Catholic worship, or the *lamentations* which the people repeat after the priest in the ceremonies of Holy Week. From

[1] *Tragedy* (τραγῳδία) itself means *goat-song*. The name may have been derived from the goat sacrificed to Dionysus at the festivals held in his honour.

The Satyrs were called *tragedians* or *goat-footed* (τράγος) by the people, from the wild and savage character of their performance. Croiset, *Histoire de la Littérature Grecque*, ii. 303.

this era dates the first attempt at setting up a stage, properly so-called. Originally it was installed in the middle of the market-place, on a table or car, whence the actor entered into relation with the chorus.

About the year 520 B.C., Thespis, the true creator of Tragedy, caused *The Funeral Games of Pelias*, *The Young Men*, *The Priests*, of which only a few insignificant fragments remain, to be played at Athens. In the tragedies by this author, the actor had to play several parts in succession, and a further innovation became necessary in the staging: this was the installation of a tent or shed in which the actor could change his costumes and masks. The primitive organisation of this tent suggested later on the erection of buildings behind the stage.

In the sixth century, and even during a part of the fifth, the poet united the function of actor with that of author. Thespis was the interpreter of his own works. He it was, moreover, who invented the use of white lead and paint for the 'make up.' The importance assumed by Tragedy soon compelled the actors to forsake the market-place, which was too narrow a stage for their performances, and they resorted for the most part to the Lenaeum or Sanctuary of the god. This enclosure was situated at the foot of a hill, the slope of which formed a natural amphitheatre capable of containing a large number of people. The first wooden benches were set up upon this slope, the orchestra being placed below, at the centre of the dance and other evolu-

tions performed by the chorus. The circle was about thirteen yards in diameter, and in its midst was an altar erected to Dionysus.

The successors of Thespis, and also the immediate predecessors of Aeschylus, are Choerilus, Pratinas, Phrynichus, who represent the second generation of tragic poets. While no important modifications were introduced, Tragedy became in their hands a kind of public institution, and was submitted to open competition. Phrynichus (of Athens) was the author of the celebrated tragedies, *The Capture of Miletus* (written 494 B.C.), and *The Phoenician Women*, both taken from contemporary history, and relating to the struggle of the Greeks with the Persians.

The tragedies of Phrynichus have all the characteristics of elegy, and are full of the most humane sentiments, expressed in a particularly touching manner in the choruses of distracted women.

Pratinas, a native of Phlius, is especially famous as a writer of satyric dramas. The Satyric Drama was a mixture of the grotesque and heroic elements, and is distinguished from Tragedy by the note of extravagant gaiety which exists nowhere else in Greek poetry.

The chorus was composed of satyrs who emancipated themselves from all discipline, gesticulated, leapt, uttered wild cries, or sang, as the fancy took them. At the head of the band was a drunken greybeard called Silenus, whose every act was held to be instinct with majesty; in his quality of companion to the young Dionysus, he even participated

to some degree in the divine nature. Besides the ribald Silenus there were monsters—the Sphinx, the sea-god Glaucus, Cyclops, and others—all characters foreign to Tragedy. The satyric drama was usually curtailed to half the length of the tragedy, and as another feature inevitably presented a happy climax.

As in Classical Tragedy, the actors were always three, and the choruses included at first fifty, afterwards fifteen singers. But it is more especially in its heroes, properly so-called, that the Satyric Drama is linked with Tragedy, for we find in it a certain number of the divinities cherished by epic poetry.

The division of the Tragedy into five parts held good equally for the Satyric Drama. Pratinas, the organiser of this style, composed fifty dramas, thirty-two of which are satyric plays; and he may be regarded as the inventor of the Tetralogy.

II

AESCHYLUS AND CLASSICAL TRAGEDY DURING THE FIRST PART OF THE FIFTH CENTURY B.C.

Religious character of the Classical Drama—Aeschylus: his Trilogies—The Tetralogy—The first stage properly so-called—First theatrical appliances—Early scenery—Poetical competitions and the Dionysia—Various formalities—Choral contests—Divisions of the Drama—Function of the chorus—Characters—Scenery—Stage-entries—The '*periaktos*'—The actors in Tragedy—Costumes—Masks—The actors in Satyric Drama—Their costume—Costume of chorus—Singers in Tragedy and Satyric Drama.

The Classical Drama was glorified by illustration from the genius of the three greatest poets of antiquity: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

It is important to note that at this period, and during the greater part of the fourth century (more particularly in Athens), the character assumed by Tragedy was that of an act of homage paid by the city to one of its divinities. For this reason, indeed, the performances were given year by year only at the stated time of the festivals of Dionysus.

Aeschylus (born 525 B.C.) was the son of a priest of Eleusis, and a valiant soldier. To this double circumstance we doubtless owe the essentially patriotic and religious character of his tragedies. These have as theme the most lugubrious legends of Greece, and they deal with the gravest problems

of sovereign justice. The theatre of Aeschylus was designed to convey moral as well as political lessons: *The Suppliant Women* inculcates hospitality as a religious duty; *The Seven against Thebes*, wisdom; *The Persians* exalts devotion to the mother-country; the *Agamemnon* treats of the limits of individual responsibility and the unknown influence of fate; *The Eumenides* represents the conflict of opposing principles of justice.

Most of the plays of Aeschylus formed part of a Trilogy. This title was given by the Greeks to a sequence of three tragedies following one upon the other, and drawn from the same legend, which were brought forward by the poets in competition for the prize. Only one complete trilogy of Aeschylus remains: the *Oresteia*. But it has been established as a fact, that the trilogy of *The Persians* consisted of the *Phineus*, *The Persians*, and *Glaucus*.

Nor can we doubt that *The Suppliant Women* formed part of a trilogy entitled *The Danaïds*. Finally, *The Eumenides* must be regarded as the third part of a trilogy, which also comprised the *Agamemnon* and the *Choëphori*. There is no evidence that all the plays of Aeschylus were written as trilogies. And, if others existed beyond those already enumerated, it is doubtful whether they were as harmonious in construction as the *Oresteia*. This group may in fact be regarded as the greatest poetical work of Greece, after the *Iliad*. It is the most tragic of the trilogies of the Greek theatre, as evidenced by the fact that,

at its first performance, the entire audience began to tremble, and the women fainted.

The German critic Schlegel acknowledges that 'the tragic style of Aeschylus is grand,' but reproaches him with being 'severe, and not infrequently hard.'[1]

Aeschylus wrote a number of satyric dramas, the most famous of which is *The Sphinx.*

The Satyric Drama, as we have seen, was often joined to the Trilogy, which was then entitled a Tetralogy. In this connection it should be remarked, that down to 472 B.C. the satyric drama formed part of the group of the tetralogy, and was related to it by its subject. After this date, however (when Aeschylus produced a tetralogy in which the satyric play *Prometheus* was distinct in subject from any of the tragedies), the subject of the satyric drama was no longer necessarily connected with that of the three other plays.

To Aeschylus we must attribute the organisation of the first stage, properly so-called. Horace tells us that it differed from the primitive platform in being permanent. Instead of a table or wagon, a platform was erected several feet above the orchestra, from which the actors descended by steps. To the same period belongs the first use of mechanical appliances for the requisitions of the stage. Foremost among these is the *ekkyklêma.* This was a kind of car upon wheels, and by its means certain things could be placed under the eyes of the spectators, which, in virtue of their

[1] *Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, I. Lect. iv.

realism, could not form part of the *mise-en-scène*, or be shown in performance. In this way it was possible after a crime to exhibit the victim, who was rolled in the car to the front of the theatre. Among other appliances was that by which the sound of thunder was imitated, traps whence the supernatural characters rose from beneath the ground, and a machine called the *mêchanê*, a sort of pulley set up behind the stage, by which the fantastic figures were raised into the air, among them the *deus-ex-machinâ*, at the close of the piece.

Before Aeschylus, and during the first years of his dramatic career, scene-painting was a thing unknown. The back of the theatre was merely a blank wall, and the only attempt at decoration was the placing on the stage of certain objects, harmonising in character with the subject of the piece. Thus in *The Suppliant Women* the only decoration was a wooden altar; in *Prometheus Vinctus* there was a lump of rock. Towards the middle of the fifth century, however, the art of decoration became perfectly well defined. The wall at the back was replaced by a painting of a palace or temple; and the *Oresteia* saw the application of this improvement. To Aeschylus has been sometimes attributed the invention of the *periaktoi* or revolving triangular prisms, which served to change the scenery of the wings. But the greatest service rendered to the theatre by Aeschylus was the introduction of a second actor, and the substitution of professional comedians for the poets.

Although the institution of poetical contests dates back to the sixth century, to the time of Pisistratus, our knowledge of this important function is not very definite before the era of Aeschylus. It is known that these contests were the chief ornament of the Dionysiac festivals, and they gave an admirable opportunity to poets seeking fame as dramatic authors.

The contests were two in kind : at the Lenaean and at the Dionysiac gatherings. The Dionysia, which were by far the most important, took place (like the Lenaea) in the hallowed sanctuary of Dionysus, on the south side of the Acropolis. They began towards March 25 or 26 of our calendar, and ended about the 30th. It was the time of year when visitors from all parts of the world flocked into the city. In that month, too, the allies came to pay their tribute. The Athenians, who were glad to profit by this circumstance to impress the strangers, gave an unparalleled splendour to the ceremony. On the eve of the festival, the statue of the god Dionysus was carried by torch-light from the temple to the theatre, where it was then placed in the orchestra. The Dionysia were subsequently inaugurated by a procession in honour of the god. This procession consisted of a number of chorus-singers—women, children, and young girls—clad in splendid costumes, and many of them wearing masks. Some of those who took part were in chariots, others followed on foot, and the immense procession thus passed through all the streets of the city, and halted in the market-place, where the

chorus danced and sang before the statues of the twelve gods. The dramatic performances did not usually begin until the second day. The number of poets entered for competition was three, and each had to present three tragedies and a satyric drama. The candidates were bound before all else to demand from the *archon* (whose duty it was to superintend the arrangements of the Dionysia) a chorus, the concession or refusal of which was the first judgment on the value of the plays. Before the performance, the sums representing the tribute paid by the allies were solemnly deposited in the orchestra. Next, those orphans (sons of the soldiers slain in battle, and brought up at the expense of the State) who had now attained their majority appeared on the scene, splendidly caparisoned. A herald related what the State had done for them, and declared them henceforward free of its control, authorising them to take their place among the other citizens. The performance then began: the order in which the plays appeared was drawn by lot; the herald summoned each poet by name, and invited him to proceed to the representation of his works. It is believed that the tragic contest lasted for three days. On the morning of each day the three tragedies and the satyric drama of one of the competitors were acted in succession. In the evening, comedies were performed.

In addition to these dramatic spectacles, there were at this epoch choral contests, which consisted in the rendering of dithyrambs with the accompaniment of the flute. Here the choruses were

twofold: a chorus of boys, and a chorus of men, each composed of fifty members.

When the contest was over, the archon drew up a report to be deposited in the archives. These reports formed a series of documents, containing all the principal facts of the history of the Drama, and Aristotle derived much of his information from them.

It is probable that there were also Lenaean contests by the time of Aeschylus, but as their existence seems absolutely certain only from the end of the fifth century, we shall consider them later on.

Since the characteristics of Tragedy, from the double point of view of its composition and of its staging, varied little as a whole in Athens after the close of the career of Aeschylus, what is said of the theatre in relation to this poet will as a general rule apply to his successors.

The Drama at that time consisted of a prologue, which took the place of the first scene, and of a considerable number of principal parts or episodes. The episodes were presented under the form of dialogues spoken between the actors; of lyrical dialogues between the latter and the chorus; of duets, and even of solos. These different parts were disposed around the choric songs, or *stasima*. The choruses served either to mark divisions in the action or to suspend it. It was thus that the members of the chorus (under Aeschylus, twelve in number) were summoned to converse with the actors, and put questions to them. They

had, moreover, to sympathise with their sorrows, and in chanting to transfer their emotions to the breasts of the spectators. The chorus included declamation and song; the recitations being the special function of the *coryphaeus*, or leader. The lyrical parts were sometimes (though very rarely) chanted by independent voices, generally sung by the chorus in unison, the singers at the same time dancing to the sound of instruments.

By dancing was then understood a series of characteristic motions of the arms, legs, and upper part of the body.

Certain of the Greek rites could only be performed by women, and for this reason among others, choruses of women are frequent in Greek Drama.

The expense of these choruses was considerable, but it formed part of the obligatory duties levied from the wealthy, corresponding to some extent with the 'income-tax' of our own day.

At the time of Aeschylus, the actors chanted with the chorus, or alone, to the accompaniment of the flute. When they recited, their delivery was modulated and intoned, in contradistinction to that prevailing in the theatre of Sophocles.

Besides the heroes, who were the two principal actors, Aeschylus had secondary characters, who played the part of servants, guardians, and messengers. It was the duty of the messengers to relate events that had occurred at a distance, and in particular to announce the catastrophe of the last act.

It has already been pointed out that decorative scene-painting was fully established by the middle of the fifth century. From this epoch, moreover, date the treatises of Democritus and Anaxagoras on the art of perspective. In all Greek plays, the action took place in the open air; the events usually occurred before some building, or in a desert place, as figured by a rock or cavern. The upper part of the scene represented the sky, the lower part was separated from it by a few inches only, and depicted a building or landscape as required by circumstances.

The stage usually presented three entries, made through the wall at the back; in addition, there were two side-entrances, one at the right, the other at the left. The openings at the bottom were reserved for persons who were supposed to enter from some cave or building. The right-hand entrance was for people of the neighbourhood; strangers from a distance came in at the left.

With some few exceptions, changes of scene were unknown in Tragedy, and even in the Old and New Comedy. Scene-shifting was obviated by a mechanical device, the *periaktos*. This was an immense triangular prism with three faces, revolving on an axis. One was placed at either side of the stage, and communicated with the lateral decorations. Each face of the *periaktos* was covered with a coat of paint of the same colour as the canvas at the end, the subject of which was never altered. By shifting the two *periaktoi* simultaneously, an entire change of scene was

effected, while the unity of the whole was preserved by the permanent decoration at the back of the stage.

Statues, altars, obelisks, tombs, and even chariots drawn by horses and mules, were added to the scenery from time to time. Whether or no a curtain was employed in the theatre of the fifth, and even the sixth century, is a point about which we have no information.

There were two categories of actors in Greece. As we have seen, the two principal artists personified the heroes. Those who played the secondary parts (not dignified in Greece by the title of actors) were divided into three classes. In the first were those who had only a few words to pronounce, such as the messengers and servants; these were generally boys. Next came the mutes, and thirdly, the supplementary chorus-singers, who chanted behind the scene. The chorus and the actors were absolutely independent of one another. The singers were paid by the *choregus*, and the comedians by the State. Later on we shall see that Sophocles created a third actor, but the number three was never exceeded, whether in Satyric Drama and Comedy, or in Tragedy. The number of actors was doubtless limited on account of the difficulty then found of procuring men whose voice was sufficiently clear and powerful to be heard by the entire audience.

In their costumes the Greeks were at no pains to ensure historical accuracy. For one thing, they were too much opposed to realism upon the stage

to tolerate the use of work-a-day garments. The actors, therefore, adopted a full robe with long sleeves, more or less like the dress of the city, but more ample and imposing, over which was thrown a cloak of different colours. The chest and limbs were padded to give bulk to the body. The tunic of the actors who played the part of women was longer than that of the men, and had a kind of train. All the actors were shod with the *cothurnus* (or tragic buskin), a kind of boot with a wooden sole of enormous thickness, painted in different colours.

But the most important part of the disguise was the mask, by means of which the actor's countenance could be distinguished at a distance, and which made it possible for the same person to play different parts by making repeated changes. This device was particularly apt for men who had to play the part of women. The masks, from the time of Aeschylus, were intended to strike terror; they were made of linen, and twenty-eight in number: six for old men, eight for the young, three for menials, eleven for women. They were distinguished from one another by the arrangement of the hair, colour of the face, and expression of the eyes: all points which enabled the spectators easily to identify the actors with their different parts at first sight.

The costumes of the actors in the Satyric Drama did not differ materially from those in Tragedy. The use of the *cothurnus*, however, was here unknown. The mask of old Silenus, the leader of

the band, would incite mirth rather than terror, since it represented a drunkard's face. The tunic, instead of being ample as with the tragic actors, was generally tight, and came down to the knee.

The choric singers in Tragedy usually wore the costume of everyday life—the tunic. The features of their masks harmonised with the age and sex of the persons they represented. They were shod with white shoes, and the old men leaned on great sticks as they walked.

In the Satyric Drama the costume of the choric singers was reduced to a thick belt of goatskin, with a tail behind. The chorus also concealed their faces behind a mask with lascivious features, to which long hair was attached.

III

SOPHOCLES, EURIPIDES, AND CLASSICAL TRAGEDY DURING THE SECOND PART OF THE FIFTH CENTURY B.C.

Sophocles: character of his plays—First introduction of love in Tragedy—Dissolution of the Trilogy—Innovations on the stage—Tragedies and Satyric Dramas by this poet—Euripides: importance of love in his plays—The *Telephus*, and realism on the stage—The *Medea*, and first studies of women—Other plays: *Helena*, *Andromache*; the Romantic Drama—Innovations in staging—Characteristics of the style of Euripides—Tragic poets of the second order; attempt at reform of the Drama—Rule of the Three Unities and its modifications—Last Tetralogies—Lenaean contests at the end of the fifth century—Rural Dionysia—Theatre of Dionysus in fifth century.

In the Tragedy of Sophocles,[1] as with Aeschylus, religious sentiment invariably occupies the first place. Sophocles is the poet of mystery, and like his predecessor, his themes are derived from the gloomiest of the Greek legends.

Aeschylus recounted the dramas of Argos. Sophocles treated of the misfortunes of Thebes, and he too raised the problems of sovereign justice. But in his hands Tragedy underwent important modifications. The first innovation bears on the dramatic conception, love making its first appearance on the stage, from which Aeschylus had ruthlessly banished woman and her foibles. He

[1] Born between 497 and 495 B.C. at Colonus, near Athens.

also reduced the importance of the chorus, together with the lyrical character imparted to it by his predecessors, in order that he might concentrate interest upon the development of character. His pieces, instead of being restricted, as in the period of Aeschylus, to four divisions, present a varying number, amounting to six in *Oedipus the King* and to seven in the *Antigone.* He also dissolved the Trilogy, and the three tragedies offered for competition are henceforward independent of each other. This innovation was adopted by the younger poets. In 467 B.C., one year, namely, after the first tragic victory of Sophocles, the young poet Aristias presented a group of independent plays.

Stage-management also underwent important modification under Sophocles. He introduced a third actor, thus giving more liberty to the poet and more vigour to the action. The serious diction and gesture, so dear to Aeschylus, gave place to a more expressive performance. The actor, whose personality is brought prominently forward, strives to give an exact imitation of life. In his delivery, his intonations, and his gestures, he always keeps real life in view. The art of elocution at this time accordingly suffered a complete revolution.

The principal quality of the actor was his excellence in elocution. Vulgar pronunciation of a word, or the slightest provincialism, exposed him to the derision of the audience. Callipides, Theodorus, Aristodemus, Polus, wrote for the stage at the end of the fifth century and during the first part of the fourth. According to most ancient authorities, the

actors were paid by the State: all such payments being made through the archon.

Following the example of Aeschylus in the *Choephori*, and improving on his original, Sophocles introduced nurses and tutors on the stage as secondary characters, who acted the part of confidants, and were largely utilised by the classical theatre of the seventeenth century.

One hundred and thirty plays are attributed to Sophocles, of which an enormous number of fragments are extant, but only seven complete tragedies have been preserved: the *Ajax*, the *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, *The Trachinian Maidens*, the *Electra*, the *Philoctetes*, *Oedipus at Colonus*. The two last were written in advanced age, but still bear the stamp of his genius.

The moral of all these plays is the necessity of suffering as expiation; they made practical application of the dogma of purification through suffering.

Sophocles also composed about twenty satyric dramas, the most celebrated being the *Boon-Companions*. Schlegel says that the style of Sophocles is characterised by a 'complete proportion and harmonious sweetness.'[1]

With Euripides, born in 480 B.C., the Drama passes almost at a bound into the province of realism. 'I have drawn men as they ought to be,' said Sophocles; 'Euripides describes them as they are.' If Aeschylus and Sophocles were the painters of heroism, Euripides was inclined essentially towards human foibles, and in this direction he is

[1] *op. cit.*

in some sort the creator of the modern theatre. Sophocles had already introduced love, but had not dared to let it speak; whereas Euripides makes it the pivot of his dramas, leaving divine justice aside, and reducing the part of the gods to a mere mechanism, especially in the climax. The most typical of his earlier plays, and that which made the greatest impression on his contemporaries, is the *Telephus* (438 B.C.), for in this he made the first step towards melodrama, as well as giving the first illustration of realistic staging.

In the *Medea* (431 B.C.), Euripides enters upon the question of tragic love; it is the inauguration of those astonishing studies of woman which dazzled, and at the same time aggrieved, his contemporaries. Such are the Medeas, the Phaedras, the Clytaemnestras which have elicited the admiration of posterity. To these violent creations we must oppose the *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, which is redolent of freshness and ideal beauty, and gave Racine's *Iphigénie* to the stage.

Between 420 and 408 B.C. Euripides composed *The Suppliant Women*, the *Cresphontes*, *The Captive Women of Troy*, the *Palamedes*, the *Orestes*, which contain some allusions to the struggle between Athens and Sparta (Peloponnesian War), and in which he gives full scope to his scepticism, emphasising his defiance of the State and the procedure of the Government; attacking with equal violence the wealthy classes and the extreme democrats; giving free vent to his hatred of life with its social and political complications. *The*

Phoenician Women and the *Alcestis* are also among the more remarkable of his tragedies. The *Helena* (which with the lost *Andromeda* dates from the last years of his life—B.C. 412) contains all the elements of the Romantic Drama.

This poet also introduced some changes in the staging. The *stasima* became conventional. The number of episodes, which till now had been variable, was fixed at four, that is six parts with the prologue and exodus. To Euripides, again, is attributed the multiplication on the stage of pedagogues, who played the part of counsellors. But his most important innovation is the appearance of the *Deus ex machinâ*, the god who appeared in the clouds at the end of the piece, and whose commentaries and explanations form an epilogue to the play.

Most of the works of Euripides terminate in this manner; more particularly the *Andromache*, the *Orestes*, the *Electra*, the *Helena*, and the *Iphigeneia among the Tauri*. In various other plays, the conclusion assumes the form of a prophecy.

The style of Euripides is at once quiet and picturesque; but he often sacrifices general effects to the perfection of particular passages. He served as model to Seneca and to Racine. Although Euripides has been described as the bitter enemy of the fair sex, it should be noted that he prefers women to men in the composition of his choruses; of his twenty tragedies, fifteen contain choruses for women.

Two tragic poets of the second order must be mentioned. These are Agathon and Carcinus,

contemporary with Sophocles and Euripides, who distinguished themselves at the end of the fifth century by their attempts to reform the Drama. Agathon was, in fact, the first author who ventured to choose his subject outside the limits of mythology and history, and for this reason his tragedy, *The Flower* (the personages in which were purely fictitious), must be regarded as a kind of social play. He it was, moreover, who led the way for the division of the Drama into acts, by substituting for the *stasima* a new kind of song—the *embolima* (or interludes)—which had no relation with the subject of the play.

While the tragic poets recognised from the outset the necessity of the 'rule of the three unities,' they endeavoured as far as possible to escape from its limitations. Thus, when the attention of the spectators was to be transferred from earth to the celestial regions, they had recourse to a kind of double painting, consisting of two scenes superposed, the one for gods and the other for men. If the action was to be transferred to a distant country, the tale of the messengers was substituted for the irregularity of an actual removal. So, too, the rigours of the unity of time were modified by somewhat conventional rules. They had actually two kinds of duration: the duration of the episodes, which was absolute, and the duration of the choruses, which was altogether imaginary.

After the death of Aeschylus, the custom of composing Tetralogies fell into disuse. In fact, three tetralogies only can be mentioned during

the latter part of the fifth century: the *Pandionid*, written by Philocles, nephew to Aeschylus; the *Oedipodeia*, composed by Meletus, the accuser of Socrates; and a third, which was the work of Plato, but was never represented, since the writer suddenly determined to abandon poetry for philosophy.

As already stated, we have no information about the character of the Lenaea with reference to Tragedy during the first three-quarters of the fifth century. It is not even known whether contests were held during the whole of this period. But it is certain that from 416 B.C. the representation of tragedies became a regular part of the Lenaean ceremonies. These took place between January 15 and February 15 (by our calendar), and presented the character of a domestic festival, strangers being for the most part rigorously excluded. The ceremony consisted in a procession of minor importance, with the performance of tragedies, and especially of comedies. The number of tragedies that had to be brought forward has not been determined, nor do we know how many poets were allowed to take part in the competition. There is, however, good reason to suppose that each competitor might offer only a single piece, the tragedies being for the most part the work of poets of the second order, or of young authors.

By the end of the fifth century, the Drama had become so popular with the Greeks, that nearly all the cities of Attica had organised dramatic representations at their rural Dionysia. These

festivals took place at the time of year that corresponds with our month of December, and the amusements of the stage were especially in vogue at Salamis, Eleusis, and in the Piraeus. The poets rarely gave new works at these rural Dionysia. They contented themselves with enacting the tragedies that had been successful at Athens. The performances were really a competition between different companies of actors, who played the pieces in vogue at the moment.

As already pointed out, the Lenaeum or Sanctuary of Dionysus was chosen from the time of Thespis for the scene of the dramatic representations. As early as 499 B.C. the construction of a stone theatre was begun there, although it remained unfinished for a century and a half. Huge wooden buildings were temporarily erected upon the space reserved for the future theatre, and throughout the fifth century the finest tragedies of Greece were played in these provisional buildings, which were doubtless removed by degrees as the stone construction was proceeded with. We have no details as to the nature of the buildings used for theatrical performances before the completion of the theatre of Dionysus. It is, however, known that the chief pre-occupation of the Greeks in arranging their dramatic spectacles, was that the audience might see what was taking place in the orchestra. And since the view of the stage was regarded as a matter of secondary importance, it follows that it must have been of very narrow dimensions.

IV

TRAGEDY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY B.C.

The poets of the decadence—Inauguration of the Theatre of Dionysus—Magnificence of performances—Tragic contests of fourth century—Admirable interpretation of Classical Tragedy—Definite cessation of dramatic production at the close of the fourth century—Position of the actor in the fourth century: his social *prestige*.

THE fourth century is a period of decadence in Tragedy. The plays of this epoch are distinguished by a total lack of force and originality in the characters.

Carcinus and his three sons, and later on Theodectes of Phaselis, and Chaeremon, attempted the rejuvenation of Tragedy by elaboration of style, but their endeavours remained sterile. The plays of the decadent poets (which are usually distinguished by their sententious and philosophical character) lived but for a day, with the exception of the *Philoctetes* of Theodectes, and the *Oeneus* of Chaeremon, which obtained some success at the time, and are the only works of interest that remain to us from this school.

From 360 B.C., and to the end of the reign of Alexander, Classical Tragedy enjoyed an extraordinary popularity at Athens as well as in the other Greek cities, nearly all of which then had

their theatres. The inauguration of the Theatre of Dionysus, moreover, took place towards the middle of the fourth century. The auditorium contained nearly 30,000 persons. This theatre afforded every convenience for the comfort of the spectators. There were numerous exits, water-courses to carry away the rain, and even vast porticos where the audience could take refuge if a storm came on. Behind the orchestra (where the evolutions of the chorus took place) were buildings of the same elevation as the auditorium. These contained boxes in which the actors robed themselves; and there were even rooms in which they could be domiciled. The façade of the auditorium represented a palace adorned with magnificent columns. Against this façade was placed a long narrow platform twelve feet in height, on which the performance took place. The model of this building was employed at Epidaurus, Ephesus, and Sicyon, for the construction of theatres containing a far larger number of spectators.

The luxuriousness of the *mise en scène* in the fourth century was quite unparalleled. Plutarch tells us that the expenses of representing a single play of Sophocles at Athens, at this period, amounted to the enormous sum of £100,000 of our currency.

Justin the historian reproaches the Athenians with their incredible extravagance upon these occasions. The drama at this period was, moreover, interpreted by the most famous of all the Greek actors: Polus of Aegina, Aristodemus, Neoptolemus,

Thessalus, and Athenodorus. It was doubtless owing to their immense talent, as well as to the splendour of the staging, that classical pieces had such an extraordinary vogue; those of Euripides in particular, which by their brilliancy totally obscured the other dramatic productions of this era.

An inscription, discovered some years ago at Athens, gives valuable data as to the nature of the Dionysiac gatherings in the years 341 and 340 B.C. From it we may conclude that the Satyric Drama was at that period completely separated from Tragedy. The Dionysia began with the representation of a single satyric drama; next, the works of one of the grand tragic poets of the last century were given. Since the dramaturgists of the day were regarded as feeble imitators of Euripides, it was customary to fall back upon the older plays. Thus in 341 the *pièce de fond* was the *Iphigeneia* of Euripides; in 340, his *Orestes*. When the satyric drama and the ancient tragedy had been played, the performance of new works was proceeded with. In the fourth century the number of poets competing was still three, but the rate of plays varied from year to year. During the early part of the fourth century, it is believed that each poet presented four independent tragedies. But in the later part there was a distinct falling-off in dramatic production. In 341 B.C. nine tragedies only were produced for competition. In 340 there were only six, and so on, to the close of the fourth century.

The middle of the fourth century must be

regarded as the golden age of Greek actors. At that era they were frequently permitted (as did Garrick with the plays of Shakespeare) to modify classical pieces to suit their fancy, and even to perform adaptations of them, under pretext of improvement. Lycurgus promulgated a law which put an end to this abuse. The great actor Polus was celebrated at this period for his interpretation of the parts of *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Electra*. Theodorus and Aristodemus often took the part of Antigone, and the character of Ajax was magnificently rendered by Timotheus.

From the close of the fourth century the composition of new tragedies ceased at Athens, the older plays alone being given at the Dionysia, which lasted down to the Roman era. In the third century the centre of literary activity was, moreover, shifted from Athens to Alexandria.

From the fifth century the position of the actors had continually improved. At the outset they were not even mentioned by name at the competitions, but from the middle of the fifth century they figure alongside of the *choregus* and the poets, a prize having been established at this time for their benefit.

Instead of being chosen by the poets, they were henceforth State officials. As early as the time of Aeschylus, Cleander and Mynniscus of Chalcis, who interpreted his tragedies, were enjoying a good position in Athenian society in virtue of their fame as actors. Under Sophocles, the troops of comedians formed actual confraternities, each member

of which was held to participate in the sacred character, and in consequence acquired a kind of inviolability. Cleidemides and Tlepolemus were the favourite actors of Sophocles.

Callipides represented the younger generation of actors, whose delivery, according to Aristotle, lacked stateliness and dignity, and was considerably overdone. This innovation excited the greatest indignation among the older actors, who hurled the epithet of 'apes' at their successors. Nicostratus, an actor of this period, was proverbial for the excellence of his diction.

The position of the actor attained its highest *prestige* in the fourth century. In that era flourished Polus of Aegina, who taught elocution to Demosthenes; Neoptolemus, the intimate friend of Philip; Aristodemus, who three times held the office of ambassador. All these actors received enormous emoluments. Demosthenes tells us that Polus received one Attic talent for two performances, *i.e.* about £120 of our money for each representation—a vast sum for those times.

Aristodemus, in his provincial tours, was paid in the same proportion. Ere long the pride of the principal actors knew no bounds; and one named Theodorus would not brook the entry of any inferior actor before his own appearance on the stage.

In this connection we must remember that the first actors were bound to play secondary parts whenever their services were thought necessary. Accordingly, weak parts were unknown upon the Greek stage.

V

OLD GREEK COMEDY

Sicilian origin: Phormis of Maenalus—Epicharmus: his plays—Creation of new characters—Athenian origin: Susarion—Fifth century: Cratinus and Eupolis—Aristophanes: character of his plays—Their influence—The Dionysia—The Lenaea—Costumes and masks in Old Comedy—The actors.

Greek Comedy, like Tragedy, sprang from the worship of Dionysus. Sicily was its cradle.

From very early days it was the custom in Laconia to celebrate the close of the vintage by public rejoicings in honour of the god. These festivals included hymns chanted by the chorus, and improvised dialogues, which often were only bitter invective, even degenerating into insult.

Eventually these dialogues grouped themselves into a kind of unity of time, place, and action. The *improvisateurs*, on their side, assumed the character of charlatans, of athletes, or of fools, who acted on trestles, or on a table decorated with branches.

Phormis of Maenalus (the most ancient writer of comedies whose name has come down to us) imposed a uniform costume upon these primitive actors, *i.e.* a kind of white cloak descending to their feet; and he also replaced the branches of trees by purple curtains. Finally, for the two buffoons he substituted sharply defined characters:

the cunning slave and the deformed cook, the two oldest parts, properly so-called, in Comedy.

Epicharmus, who is generally considered the true creator of Comedy (and who left Megara, his native town, to go to Syracuse, about 486 B.C.), continued in the direction of giving more unity to the subject and more force to the action. He augmented the number of actors, and instead of two interlocutors we find henceforward several persons speaking in their turn. The names of thirty-six comedies of Epicharmus have come down to us. Those best known are *The Marriage of Hebe*, *The Braggart*, the *Cyclops*, the *Prometheus.*

The principal personages in the comedy of Epicharmus were heroes and gods, and in this his plays resembled the satyric dramas of Athens. Their aim was political and moral, but the actors were careful to abstain from all direct allusion.

From being personal at the outset, Comedy in the hands of Epicharmus became general. For the rest, many of his pieces were only simple mimes, giving exceedingly faithful pictures of everyday life.

The great glory of Epicharmus lay in the creation of three types which have come down to us: the heavy peasant, the drunkard, and especially the parasite.[1]

[1] The comedy of Epicharmus gave rise to the Mime, as represented by Sophron, contemporary with Euripides, and his son Xenarchus, whose plays are divided into two groups: masculine Mimes and feminine Mimes. All that is known of the Greek Mime is that it consisted of short scenes in dialogue, of an animated, lively character, as suggested by some incident of daily life. The Mime was, moreover, in prose, with interpolated rhymed portions.

The beginnings of Comedy were in Athens what they had been in Sicily. It originated in an extempore dialogue which formed part of the Festival of Dionysus in the country districts of Attica. Susarion, towards the end of the seventh century, was the first to submit these dialogues to a sort of versification. The style, however, remained undeveloped throughout the sixth century. It was not till the commencement of the fifth that true Comedy made its appearance in Athens.

The first comic poets worthy of the name are Chionides, Magnes, Ecphantides, but their productions have not come down to us.

The second half of the fifth century produced, alongside of Aristophanes, a few clever poets in Comedy. In the first place, we must mention Cratinus, who made a real political satire out of the comedy. His greatest success was in 423 B.C. One of his plays, *The Women of Thrace*, was a kind of protest against the importation into Athens of strange divinities. The principal subject of this comedy appears to have been a satire upon the worship of the goddess Bendis, a sort of Thracian Artemis.

Eupolis (whose first work was represented in 432 B.C.), the most famous of the contemporaries of Aristophanes, was distinguished by the charm and grace of his compositions. In some of his pieces, nevertheless, he carried political raillery to the verge of outrage; such is his comedy *The Flatterers*, and still more that entitled *The Dippers*, directed against Alcibiades, who revenged himself

by throwing the author into the sea. Nor must Phrynichus be forgotten, for his piece, called *The Misanthrope*, played in 414 B.C., tended to develop the Comedy of Character.

Aristophanes, the most celebrated writer of Old Comedy, was born in Aegina (about 450 B.C.) in easy circumstances. His first piece, which has been lost, dates from 427. It was an attack upon the education of the time, which he depicts as immoral. His second work (also non-extant), *The Babylonians*, written in 426 B.C., was another violent satire directed against the democratic government.

Eleven plays out of the fifty-four attributed to Aristophanes have been preserved. *The Acharnians*, played at the time of the Lenaean gathering, is the earliest of the comedies that have come down to us from this author. In this piece Aristophanes attacks Lamachus the general, and Euripides, whom he execrates. *The Acharnians* and also *The Peace* are an indictment of war. *Lysistrata* is an indirect plea for the emancipation of women: a question that was already the topic of the day at Athens. His other comedies are *The Knights*, *The Clouds* (directed against Socrates), *The Women celebrating the Feast of Demeter*, *The Wasps*, *The Parliament of Women* (attack on Plato), *The Birds*, and lastly *Plutus*, a satire on men who commit nothing but follies, and the gods who misgovern the world. This comedy, which dates from 388 B.C., is the latest work of Aristophanes that has come down to us. It contains all the elements

of the Comedy of Character. The most famous of all the pieces of the great Greek comedian is that entitled *The Frogs*. The chief object of this play was to establish the superiority of Aeschylus over Euripides, and to represent the latter as an immoral and impious person. *The Frogs* obtained the first prize at the competition, as well as the rare distinction of a second performance very soon after the first had been given.

Aristophanes mocked at everything, even at what was good. If he set himself the task of correcting with a smile, he missed his aim, for far from making any improvement, his satires, though full of useful truths, did but help on the work of destruction then beginning. He had the bad taste to attack the accredited divinities of his country. 'By shaking the faith of his fellow-citizens in the oracles and prophecies, he discouraged hope, and arrested the impulse of the soul towards the future.' For this Victor Hugo declared Aristophanes to be 'the only evil and disastrous genius that has ever existed.'

The exact period at which the representations of comedies at the Dionysia were instituted is unknown, but certain Athenian inscriptions establish beyond a doubt that they were in full vigour by 459 B.C. The number of poets entered for competition was three, at the Dionysiac as well as at the Lenaean gathering.

Comedy, as we have said, was the principal feature of the Lenaea. Tradition tells us that these contests were instituted from the middle of the fifth

century, but details of their nature and organisation prior to Aristophanes are wanting.

In the time of this author three poets only were admitted to compete, each of whom presented a single piece. Four of the comedies of Aristophanes, *The Acharnians*, *The Knights*, *The Wasps*, *The Frogs*, were given at the Lenaea. Otherwise, the great comedian seems to have produced his works indifferently at the Lenaean or the Dionysiac Festival.

In Old Comedy the costumes of the actors closely resembled those of ordinary life. The masks were usually of a grotesque and extraordinary type, harmonising with the character of the early comedy, in which parody and caricature were the principal elements. But where the piece was aimed at some well-known personality, such as Socrates or Euripides, the mask reproduced the features of the person indicated. The costume of the chorus-singers was the ordinary tunic, covered with a cloak, which was laid aside when they danced. Their masks were essentially grotesque, and for the most part represented distorted countenances. In addition, moreover, to the ordinary chorus, there were others of a highly fantastic character; as in the plays of Aristophanes, where there is a chorus of birds; in a play by Magnes, one of insects; in Archippus, one of fishes; in Cratinus, one of the seasons. In such instances the costumes and masks were arranged as realistically as possible.

We have said that in Comedy, as in Tragedy,

the principal actors (properly so-called) were three in number. It should be added that these actors never interchanged their styles: both Tragedy and Comedy preserved a separate interpretation.

VI

THE MIDDLE COMEDY AND THE NEW COMEDY

Fourth century B.C. : transition from Old to Middle Comedy; suppression of the chorus—Antiphanes, Eubulus, Alexis—General characteristics of the Middle Comedy: its function—The New Comedy: its characteristics; the Prologue—Philemon—Menander and the Comedy of Manners—Characters in the New Comedy—Disciples of Epicurus—Dorian Comedy; Rhinthon and his successor Livius Andronicus—The Dionysiac and Lenaean gatherings—Masks and costumes in the New Comedy—The Athenian public and performances—Conditions of admission—The 'Lessee'—The different seats—Cabals in the theatre: methods of protesting—The *claque*—Susceptibilities of the spectators.

The Old Comedy was in its essence the outcome of the free democracy of Athens, and with the temporary suppression of this by the Thirty, and the hampered and enfeebled condition of the State after the democracy had been restored, the Old Comedy decayed. Popular satire was not at the outset rejected by the Middle Comedy. The politicians and orators of the period were the special butt of its raillery. Its attacks, however, had little weight, since it was forbidden to satirise living persons by name. Another important event tended to accentuate the pacific tendencies of the Comedy. This was the suppression, some time before 388 B.C., of the choric songs, which had essentially usurped the rôle of mocking and slandering.

The decline of the comic chorus, thus reduced to the perfunctory part of interlocutor, is seen markedly in the *Plutus*, B.C. 388; and its withdrawal as a political organ is accounted for by the gradual evanescence of political interest. The comedies of Antiphanes are believed to have contained no choruses. This revolution, along with the inevitable changes entailed in the choice of subjects, involved some important modifications, both in stage properties and in costumes. The masks in particular, since they could no longer be made to resemble special personages, developed into a general travesty designed to excite laughter.

The style, too, was affected by these changes: it became less and less poetical, and more nearly resembled prose and the current language of the day.

This school, no work of which has come down to us, flourished between 388 and 322 B.C., and was illustrated by Antiphanes, Eubulus, and Alexis.

Antiphanes, who was born towards the close of the fifth century, and died at the age of seventy-four, a little before 330 B.C., is said to have composed two hundred and sixty comedies. In several of his pieces, he attacked the religious sects, more particularly the Pythagoreans, on whom he heaped the bitterest invective.

Eubulus, contemporary with Antiphanes, and the author of some hundred comedies, amused himself with parodying illustrious writers. Euripides and Plato were the subjects of his coarsest pleasantries.

The poet Alexis (uncle of Menander), who died at the age of one hundred, occupies the whole of the fourth century. To him are attributed two hundred and forty-five comedies, in which there is little introduction of mythology. He attacked the philosophers with great bitterness.

The attacks of the Middle Comedy are directed against certain general types, as well as against some social conditions. It frequently ridicules strangers and provincials. The courtesans of the day, the prostitutor, are brought on the stage to discuss theses. Various trades lent their name to the plays of the Middle Comedy: among others, players on stringed instruments of every kind, dancers, apothecaries, physicians, usurers, athletes, charioteers, fencing-masters, nurses, rascals, debauched old men, and swaggering soldiers, are all types dear to the Middle Comedy, which is essentially a Comedy of Intrigue. Character is little developed in it — a fact, a simply-told adventure forms its basis.

Two characters are integral parts of all these plays: the parasite and the cook, who for the rest bequeathed their names to particular comedies. The Middle Comedy devotes long passages to descriptions of eating and drinking, and to this, no doubt, it owes its reputation for coarseness. This charge, however, is much exaggerated, as is evident if we reflect that the banquet has always been one of the traditional elements in Greek Comedy. The Middle Comedy must be regarded as a kind of link between the Old and New Comedy. It is

connected with the former by the taste for allegory and parody which predominated in Old Comedy, and characterised all the plays of the comic theatre during the first part of the fourth century. It is associated with the latter by a habit of observation, and of exposing the manners of a certain class of people and the absurdities of certain trades. Developing gradually, this study, which had been superficial in the time of Alexis and of Antiphanes, reached its highest degree of perfection under Menander.

An innovation of real importance, towards the middle of the fourth century, was the definite adoption of the prologue of Tragedy, which in Middle Comedy had made but a timid appearance. This prologue assumed the character of a friendly conversation, permitting all kinds of observations about the comedy. This marks an initial difference from the previous style; but what distinguishes the New Comedy from the Old, and also from the Middle Comedy, is its search after truth, its portrayal of contemporary manners, and still more its treatment of the erotic passions, which underlie all subsequent drama.

Intrigue also was perfected, and, as Schlegel points out, the New Comedy 'endeavours after union and connection, and has in common with Tragedy a formal development and catastrophe': in short, a unity which is lacking in the plays of Aristophanes. As M. Jacques Denys has well said, 'The Old Comedy, which had been only a caricature of life, was transformed with the New

Comedy of Menander into a real painting of existence.'

The most celebrated poets of the New Comedy are Philemon and Menander. Philemon, a native of Cilicia, began to exhibit about 330 B.C., and died in 262 at the age of ninety-nine. Ninety to ninety-seven comedies are attributed to him, from which Plautus often drew inspiration for his pieces. In fact he borrowed from Philemon the subject of *The Merchant*, the *Trinummus*, and the *Mostellaria*.

Menander, termed at Athens 'the star of the New Comedy,' was born in that city in 340 B.C., and began to make himself known about 322. He was brought up by his uncle Alexis, and had more particularly imbibed the principles of Theophrastus and Epicurus. Plautus took from him the subject of the *Bacchis Sisters* and of the *Stichus*; Terence, that of the *Andrian Woman*, *The Brothers*, and *The Self-Tormentor*.

The comedies of Menander are *par excellence* comedies of manners, for notwithstanding the somewhat deceptive titles of his pieces, *e.g.* *The Misanthrope*, *The Superstitious Man*, *The Irritable Man*, *The Flatterer*, they contain nothing profound or truly universal.

Menander modified some of the characters created by his predecessors: he raised the braggart soldier to the level of the fop, and transformed the parasite into the flatterer. As critic, he specially attacked the superstition imported from Asia, which was one of the plagues of Greece, and ridiculed those who were capricious and whimsical.

The greatest glory of Menander was the invention of a style from which the Comedy of Character, properly so called, was to spring in Rome a century later.

Among the remaining poets of the New Comedy we must cite Apollodorus of Carystus, who gave to Terence the original of the *Phormio* and the *Hecyra*; Diphilus of Sinope, contemporary with Menander, from whom Plautus borrowed the subject of the *Casina*; and Posidippus (of Cassandrea in Macedonia), who made his appearance about 290 B.C. All these poets were fervent admirers of Epicurus, whose name comes up constantly in their comedies.

As M. Croiset has said, 'What the poets of the New Comedy best exhibited to their public was the ways of thinking and feeling in which all men are alike; what they brought out most successfully was the distinctions due to age, sex, and social conditions: to this end they created three or four types of fathers, two or three of young people, of slaves, of courtesans, and of married women.'

Towards the commencement of the third century the Dorian Comedy took a new lease of life with the writings of Rhinthon, who gave his name to a development of it called *Rhinthonica*. This poet exaggerated the style of Epicharmus, and parodied the tragedies of the great poets of Athens to the letter. It is believed that Plautus borrowed the subject of his *Amphitryo* from this author. The successors of Rhinthon, in the comic style, are Livius Andronicus and Naevius, who left their native

country about the middle of the third century, and transferred the masterpieces of the Greek theatre to the Roman stage.

From the fourth century the comic poets admitted to the Dionysia were five in number. This increase was doubtless due to the disappearance of the chorus, which left a void, and allowed more time to be devoted to the representation of plays.

The increased number of competitors raised the number of comedies to five, for each poet presented a single piece. While the gatherings of comedians at the Dionysia were instituted later than the tragic competitions, they lasted for a longer period. Hence in the middle of the fourth century, that is, as late as the year 353 B.C., there was still no dearth of new comedies at the gatherings. We are, however, ignorant of the fate of Comedy at the Dionysia during the hundred and fifty years that followed. On the other hand, we know that from the second century the custom of inaugurating the feast by the representation of early comedies had become a normal occurrence. These old plays resembled the modern *lever de rideau*, and were drawn exclusively from the repertory of the New Comedy. Thus the most popular pieces of the day were *The Ghost* of Menander and *The Phocians* of Philemon. The registers of the second century foreshadow the approaching dissolution of the Comedy, for the melancholy phrase, 'In this year there was no performance of comedies,' recurs from time to time. It seems probable that by the end

of the second century the representation of any sort of comedy at the Dionysia had become an altogether exceptional event.

In the fourth century the number of competitors at the Lenaea, which had been three, was increased to five, and lasted thus into the third century, after which all trace of competitions of comedians at the Lenaean gathering is lost.

Although the New Comedy was a Comedy of Manners, and pretended to be a faithful mirror of the life and customs of the day, the masks of the actors by no means harmonised with the character of the piece. As in Old Comedy they were designed to give a grotesque expression, save in the case of a few young men and girls, who were represented under the most pleasing aspect. The chief types of the New Comedy are the inflexible father, the benevolent patriarch, the prodigal son, the boor, the heir, the bully, the pimp, the attorney's wife, the courtier, whose masks all differed by certain distinctive signs. The complexion and arrangement of the hair were the most important characteristics of the masks. Those who were sick or in love were pale; strong persons had a bronzed tint; rascals and slaves had ruddy cheeks and hair; old men wore their hair cropped short; soldiers had long manes; courtesans wore ornaments in their hair; fighters had their ears torn (corresponding with the broken nose of the modern pugilist). The costumes in New Comedy resembled those of everyday life: white was worn by slaves, purple by young men, black and grey by parasites. Old

women were clad in blue or yellow. The beard, in men, was the sign of maturity.

On the days of the performances at Athens there was a general holiday, and all citizens, including slaves, were admitted to the entertainment given in honour of the god. Even criminals were let out of prison, and allowed to take part in the festival. The crowd, consisting of representatives from all classes of society, clad in tunics of white, red, brown, yellow, and other bright colours, assembled at daybreak, and even on the night before, at the doors of the theatre, to get the best places. Women as well as adults were admitted to the performance. Plato and Aristotle make various references to their presence in the theatre. Doubt has, however, been cast upon these statements by several authors, who see in the coarse and immoral character of the Old Comedy an objection to the attendance of respectable women and children. These writers lose sight of the fact that the Drama was primarily a religious office, and that what might under other circumstances have appeared unsuitable, was quite natural as homage to the deity.

Since the State organised these performances for the benefit of the people, the seats were originally free. Subsequently, to avoid the disputes which arose over choosing the best places, an entrance-fee of two obols a head was instituted. But in order to satisfy the poorer classes, who complained that the rich people bought up all the places beforehand, Pericles decreed, in the middle of the fifth century, that the less well-to-do citizens might

demand from the State the two obols required for admission. The fee was received by the 'Lessee,' or contractor, who undertook the management of the theatre in terms of an agreement drawn up with the State. He was, moreover, bound to keep places in the front rows for the priests, the principal State officials, the ten generals, and the ambassadors.

When the theatre was filled, it contained about thirty thousand persons. In the centre, that is in the best place, sat the priest of Dionysus. Strangers were for the most part relegated to the back rows. Women were separated from men, courtesans from honest women. The performances began at sunrise, and lasted uninterruptedly till the evening. As there were no *entr'actes*, the spectators had to bring their provisions, which they ate during the less interesting parts of the play; but as soon as the great actors came on the scene, the viands were put aside out of respect for them.

Among the spectators were to be found the different types of our modern theatrical assemblies, among them the grumbler and the enthusiast. There, too, were the young bloods, who sometimes combined in bands to hiss a piece and cry it down. The least act of violence, however, was held to be sacrilege, and exposed the delinquent to heavy punishment. Still, the audience expressed their discontent or satisfaction quite as noisily as in the present day. A habit, peculiar to Athenians when they desired to protest at the theatre, was that of knocking the stone or wooden bench on which

they were seated with the heels of their sandals; and to show disapprobation they provided themselves with figs, olives, and even with stones, to throw at the heads of the actors.

The organised *claque* to excite the enthusiasm of the spectators for any given play, or in favour of some new actor, was an established thing from the fifth century.

The Athenians were perfectly willing that their divinities should be ridiculed upon the stage, but they were implacable directly there was any question of dogma. The slightest affectation of atheistic sentiments, the least violation of religious institutions, was liable to provoke an outburst of extreme indignation. Aristotle tells us that Aeschylus was nearly killed in the theatre, because he was accused of revealing part of some of the mysteries in one of his plays. Again, the expression of any low or simply vulgar sentiment on the stage excited severe resentment. Thus, according to Seneca, the *Danaë* of Euripides was hissed, and almost withdrawn from the stage, because it contained a passage which descanted on the advantages of money.

THE LATIN THEATRE

I

TRAGEDY

Third century B.C.: Livius Andronicus and the earliest tragedies—The first actors—The *Canticum*—Naevius—Ennius—Second century B.C.: *Ludi circenses* and *Ludi scenici*—Marcus Pacuvius: his plays—Resurrection of chorus of Greek Tragedy—Lucius Accius, creator of the national tragedy—Performance of Greek plays in the original text—First century B.C.: arrest of dramatic production—The *Medea* of Ovid, and the *Thyestes* of Varius—First century of the Christian era—Pomponius Secundus—Seneca and his tragedies—Curiatius Maternus.

Although the Greek language was known in Italy long before the third century, it was only practised by the Romans after that date. In the first instance, the great personages sent out from Rome as ambassadors employed it as the diplomatic language; then the submission of Tarentum and other Greek colonies in 265 B.C. contributed to its diffusion among the conquerors. Finally, the annexation of Sicily in 241 led to the definite introduction of Greek literature into the Roman world. The earliest performance of a tragedy, the work of Livius Andronicus, in Rome, took place during the year following the First Punic War. This author, a native of Tarentum, left his own country after the capture of that city, and arrived in Rome towards 272 B.C. There he employed his

knowledge of the two languages for the translation of Greek tragedies into Latin. He showed a preference for such as lent themselves to a spectacular display that would excite the interest of the masses. The first performance of a complete work in this style took place in 240 B.C., and it is believed that the author himself took a part. Livius Andronicus not only created the drama in Rome, but must further be credited with initiating the profession of the actor, a task which cost him long and painful effort.

His first expounders were young men of good family, but they soon tired of the trade. Livius Andronicus was then obliged to seek his collaborators among the freed men and the slaves. He moulded them to their new vocation, and eventually constituted them into a regular company. The low social condition of these first actors was in great measure the cause of the ostracism from which the Roman stage was always to suffer.

Livius substituted for the chorus of the Greek Tragedy the *canticum* or lyric monody. The canticum, according to Livy, consisted of a few verses interspersed in the course of the play. At the outset these were interpreted by the singer who uttered the sounds, the actor who explained the words of the singer by dance and gesture, and the flute-player or accompanist. In fact, the Roman drama of those days closely resembled our own *opéra comique*, where we have a part to be spoken and parts to be sung. The only apparent

difference between the two styles of composition is that in the Roman plays some verses were intended to be sung, while others were simply to be recited. It was more especially in Comedy that the canticum occupied the first place.

Of the works of Livius Andronicus nothing remains but the titles of a few plays: the *Ajax*, the *Helena*, the *Hermione*, the *Aegisthus*, the *Tereus*, of which we do not even know the Hellenic origins. All that can be affirmed is that the author set himself to reproduce the most dramatic of the Greek legends upon the stage.

Naevius, a contemporary of Livius, and a native of Campania, translated or imitated the tragedies of Aeschylus or Euripides, and aimed at perfecting the style of his predecessor; but he often falls into bombast and triviality. The date of his birth is unknown; it is only certain that Livius Andronicus was in the zenith when Naevius produced his first tragedy, that is, in the year 235 B.C. Exiled from Rome in 205, he withdrew to Utica, where he died in 203. Naevius was particularly distinguished as a writer of comedies. He was the inventor of the *togata*, or comedy of the toga, in which the characters were Roman.

Ennius, who belongs to the same school, was born at Rudiae, a town of Calabria, in 240 B.C., and was the friend of Scipio Africanus. This writer is known particularly by his translations of Euripides. He adapted more than twenty tragedies for the Latin theatre, the most celebrated being the *Andromache*, the *Hecuba*, and the *Medea*.

This last work is an almost literal translation of the drama of Euripides. His *rôle* of imitator deprives the plays of Ennius of any character of originality, but this poverty of conception was redeemed by the excellence of his style.

Ennius was undoubtedly a good poet, nevertheless his talent did not justify the high opinion he formed of his own value, for he compared himself with the utmost sincerity to Homer. He died at Rome in 170 B.C.

Ennius was further distinguished as a writer of comedies, and Terence owns that he was much indebted to him.

The *Ludi circenses* (or gladiatorial games) always attracted the Romans more powerfully than the *Ludi scenici* (or theatrical representations properly so-called). Familiarised from an early period with the combats of gladiators or of animals, the spectators would perforce find little pathos in the most terrible situations of the drama, in comparison with the appalling butcheries of the circus. And for this very reason the complete development of Tragedy in Rome was always hampered with difficulties.

Yet from the middle of the second century, the pronounced taste of the upper classes for intellectual pleasures prevailed with the lower orders, and they also became interested in Tragedy. The second century was thus an epoch peculiarly propitious to the development of the dramatic type, and Pacuvius and Accius stamped it with their genius.

Marcus Pacuvius, nephew of Ennius, was a native of Brundusium. The date of his birth is unknown, but he died at Tarentum in 130 B.C. at a very advanced age. Pacuvius wrote some twenty tragedies; the most famous, entitled *Dulorestes*, treats of the misfortunes of Orestes driven from his father's house. The author traces the story of his wanderings through the world, his return to Argos, and vengeance upon his father's murderers. In choosing his subject, Pacuvius was inspired by several passages of the *Iphigeneia among the Tauri* of Euripides, as well as by the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus. Among his predecessors the canticum, or lyric monody, occupied a very secondary position. Pacuvius gave it a much greater importance, so that some of his songs could only be executed by choruses as important as those of the Greek Tragedy. Pacuvius, indeed, approximated to this type of drama by the very nature of his monodies, the singers being charged (as in the Greek theatre) with the expression of the emotions to which the play had given rise in the minds of the spectators. Although Pacuvius borrowed all his subjects from the Greeks (except the *Paullus*), his compositions were none the less original in their treatment and in the vigour of the characters. It is a matter of regret that his qualities should be spoiled by the exaggerated solemnity of his style.

Lucius Accius is regarded as the creator of the true Roman Tragedy: the *Praetexta*, or national drama, the subjects of which are drawn from contemporary history. The form and character of the

praetexta were modelled upon Greek Tragedy, but the tone was less sublime.

Accius was the son of a freed man; he was born in Rome probably about 165 B.C. The exact date of his death is unknown; but he lived to a very advanced age. He was the friend of the more powerful men of his day, including Decimus Brutus. Accius wrote more than fifty plays, among them *Brutus*, *Decius*, *Marcellus*, which were all praetextae, tragedies with an exclusively Roman subject. His other dramas were more or less loose translations, or at least imitations, of Greek plays, borrowed either from Sophocles, as *The Trachinian Maidens*; from Euripides, as *The Phoenician Women*; or from Aeschylus, as *Prometheus Unbound*, *Philoctetes*, *The Argonauts*. Aeschylus was, however, the Greek author most studied by Accius, and the translations of his works were more especially appreciated by the Romans. Quintilian says of Accius, 'that he was remarkable, like Pacuvius, for the seriousness of his thought and the weight of his expressions.' He might have added that Accius excelled Pacuvius in the elegance and variety of his style. It should be noted that at the end of the second century, at the epoch namely of the Jugurthine War (110-102 B.C.), tragedies were being played in the original Greek as well as these translated or adapted pieces.

By the time of Cicero, B.C. 83-43, the vein of tragic authorship was exhausted; the plays of Naevius and Ennius, and above all of Pacuvius and Accius, were again put upon the boards, and

interpreted very clearly by the famous actor Esopus.

During the reign of Augustus (B.C. 30-14 A.D.), Asinius Pollio is cited as the author of tragedies which, according to Horace, were acted on the stage. But the two best-known compositions of this period were the *Medea* of Ovid and the *Thyestes* of Varius, tragedies that are unfortunately lost to us. The *Medea* is the only dramatic composition of Ovid, and seems to have been the work of which he was the most proud: 'Thanks to my pains,' he says, 'tragedy has acquired a more elevated style. I have made kings to speak with a becoming dignity. I have restored the majesty of the buskin.' The *Medea* of Ovid was doubtless a copy of the *Medea* of Euripides, the Latin poet being, from his turn of mind, peculiarly apt to seize upon and render the strength and beauty of the Greek play. The exact nature of the *Thyestes* of Varius is also unknown, and whether or no it had a Greek origin. Whether the *Medea* and the *Thyestes* were ever played is again a much disputed question. The best critics of to-day incline to the opinion that they were not acted, but were simply written for the benefit of the men of letters who gathered to admire the beauties of the two tragedies at the public readings so much in vogue at that period. However this may have been, the two tragedies were reckoned the finest dramatic productions of the Latin genius.

Pomponius Secundus (A.D. 14-37) lived in the reign of Tiberius. Little is known of his life or

works. The title only of one of his plays is extant: *Aeneas*, which no doubt was a Roman drama.

In the reign of Nero (A.D. 54-68), Tragedy achieved considerable distinction, owing to the talent of Seneca.

Seneca, the philosopher, was born at Cordova in 2 or 3 A.D. He came in extreme youth to Rome, where he studied rhetoric and philosophy, and soon became famous for his eloquence. At a later period Agrippina appointed him tutor to Nero, whose evil instincts he amused himself by flattering. He even wrote an *apologia* for the parricide, but eventually fell into disgrace with the tyrant, who commanded that his veins should be opened (A.D. 65). Seneca composed a number of tragedies imitated from the Greek. The only surviving works are: (1) *Medea*; (2) *Hippolytus*, from which Racine borrowed more than once; (3) *Agamemnon*, a subject imitated by Nepomucène Lemercier at the end of the eighteenth century; (4) *The Trojan Women*; (5) *The Raging Hercules*; (6) *Thyestes*; (7) *The Phoenician Women*, or *The Thebaïs*; (8) *Oedipus*, an imitation of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*; (9) *Hercules on Oeta*; (10) *Octavia*. All these compositions display great talent for form on the author's part, together with much psychological observation. But the characters only make speeches, and indulge in long descriptions and repetitions to an extent that renders the plays insipid. Although dramatic performances were still given under Nero, it is improbable that the

plays of Seneca were intended to be acted, for the author makes for effects of style far more than for theatrical effects.

Tacitus commends the poet Curiatius Maternus, who was already distinguished in the time of Nero as the author of a tragedy of Greek origin called *Medea*.

In the reign of Vespasian this writer attained a certain celebrity by his two national tragedies, *Domitius* and *Cato*, with another called *Thyestes*, imitated from Seneca.

Generally speaking, after the reign of Augustus, the performances became less and less frequent. The dramas of Seneca were, however, played from time to time as late as the fifth century of the Christian era.

II

THEATRES IN ROME, AND FORMALITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE DRAMATIC REPRESENTATIONS

Principal Roman festivals—The Curtain—Temporary theatres—First permanent theatre—The Stage—The Chorus of Roman Tragedy—Wigs and masks—Division of the plays—Literary copyright in Rome—Limited number of tragedies—The public and the performances—Use of the *tesserae* (counters)—Principal theatres in Rome and in the provinces.

The dramatic representations in Rome, as in Greece, were for a long time accessory to religious worship. Every year there were four or five gatherings: the Roman (or great) Games, the Plebeian Games, the Games of Apollo, the Megalesian Games, and under the Republic the Floral Games. These functions were regulated by the magistrates, whose duty it was to watch over the health and the amusements of the people. Custom demanded that dramatic performances should figure in the programme of these entertainments.

The Roman theatres were originally vast enclosures in the open air, usually in the form of a circus, with a scaffold in the centre which was removed after each performance. The spectators stood round the arena, or seated themselves on

little mats stuffed with rushes. Under these conditions the plays of Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius were acted.

After 145 B.C. a complete theatre was constructed from the Greek model, with tiers of raised seats surrounding it. At the end of each year it was demolished, to be rebuilt the next season. It was not till 55 B.C. that Pompey built a stone theatre upon level ground (as all Roman theatres were built subsequently). It consisted of three floors separated by ample corridors, and reached by staircases that enabled the spectators to get to their respective places. The senators occupied the orchestra, *i.e.* the place reserved for the chorus in the Greek theatre.

A low wall divided the orchestra from the stage, at the back of which was another wall of bricks, with three large openings for the principal comedians; behind were the stage-buildings and dressing-rooms for the actors. At first the theatre was quite open; later on a canvas sheet was put up above the auditorium, and worked by means of cords, to protect the spectators from the heat of the sun.[1] The scene, instead of representing a palace as at Athens, depicted a market-place, with several streets leading into it. The Romans also provided their theatres with a curtain, supposed to be unknown on the Greek stage. This curtain was lowered at the beginning of a play, and raised at the end. It was a light frame, and worked from

[1] Some theatrical notices have been discovered amongst the ruins of Pompeii, which promise that the audience shall be shaded from the sun.

below upwards; and could be lowered beneath the level of the stage, and pulled up, as required.

Before the commencement of the play, it was for a long time customary to call on the people to pause and acknowledge the religious character of the festival.

The Romans could not have a chorus like that of the Greek theatre. The arrangements by which the orchestra was assigned to the Senate excluded the possibility of a dancing chorus. On the other hand, there must have been a great number of actors on the stage who sung, more especially at the time of Pacuvius and Accius. The tragedy comprised quiet passages, and other more animated parts, with songs and dialogues. The music (that is, the flute) accompanied the voice of the actors, and its melodies filled up the intervals.

During the early centuries, the Roman actors used no mask: Livius Andronicus replaced it by paint, and employed special head-dresses. These wigs differed according to the age and condition of the characters: they were white for the old people, blonde for the young, red for the slaves. Later on the mask became obligatory on the stage. The exact date of this revolution is unknown; we are told that under Plautus its use was optional, while under Terence it was obligatory.

The earliest Latin plays were as to division an exact copy of the Greek plays. The same musical intervals are found, as a rest for the actors. It is attested, without any decisive proof, that Latin Comedy was divided into five parts or scenes, the

name of act being given to the three principal parts of the subject: the beginning, middle, and end. This, however, is merely a supposition.

Literary copyright was a thing unknown in Rome. Any individual might copy the play when it appeared, and dispose of it as he pleased. The writer, in selling his play to the aedile, did not part with his author's rights in the future. At the outset the magistrates dealt directly with the poet whose performance was 'for sale.' By the terms of this sale the author was obliged to meet all expenses of staging, and of producing the different copies to be used by the actors. Later on he formed a permanent company, headed by some popular actor to whom he resigned his rights. The magistrate then negotiated with the actor at the risk and peril of the latter; that is to say, the actor's salary would be reduced if the piece did not satisfy the crowd.

The number of Roman tragic poets during the three centuries from Livius Andronicus to Curiatius Maternus is, at most, thirty-six, and the number of tragedies does not exceed one hundred and fifty. The tragedies of Seneca are the only pieces that have come down to us.

The performances were public in Rome, and in the third century B.C. the humblest persons vied with the most important in obtaining the best places: to this end they often went at daybreak to the doors of the theatre, and waited in line for the play to begin.

All classes of society elbowed each other on the

tiers of the theatre: patricians and people, as well as the slaves, who often managed in the general confusion to slip into the theatre. Women always attended in numbers; even nurses came with their charges on their arms. The courtesans were especially noisy, and played a preponderating part in the cabals intended to cry down a piece. It may have been partly for this reason that Augustus, in the first century of the Christian era, interdicted women from entering the theatre.

At the beginning of the second century, when special places were reserved for the *equites* (knights) and senators, what were called *tesserae* were distributed beforehand: these were counters securing to the bearer a particular seat. The director of the theatre disposed of a number of tesserae to his friends and acquaintances. These counters, available for a single performance, were much like the counterfoils of our own theatres. They carried designs of gods, temples, or theatres; sometimes a single password in Greek was written on them. The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris possesses eleven of these tesserae, the British Museum has seventy, the Naples Museum fifty-eight.

In the first century A.D. the principal Roman theatres were the theatre of Pompey, which was of enormous dimensions; that of Scaurus, constructed by Scaurus, son-in-law to Sylla, (the most ornate of the Roman theatres); the theatre of Balbus Cornelius, built under Augustus, and entirely constructed of marble; the theatre of Marcellus, anterior by a few years to the Christian

era. There were also some notable theatres in the provinces[1]: at Orange, Lyons, Herculaneum, and, in the East, at Antioch.

[1] A proprietor in the Seine-Inférieure, M. Chamond, offered (in February 1900) to present a Roman theatre to his department.

This theatre was discovered a few years ago, during some archæological researches. It is situated in the commune of S. André-sur-Cailly; it measures 150 metres in circumference, the entrance to the stage 79 metres. The ancient boxes, dormitories, and many of the tiers of seats are in perfect preservation. The *Conseil général* of the Seine-Inférieure proposes to organise performances there after the style of those at Orange.

III

COMEDY IN ROME

Fourth century B.C.: origin of Comedy; the *Satura*—Third century B.C.: the *Mimus*; its character; its different interpreters—The *Palliata*—Livius Andronicus, Naevius, and Ennius—Plautus, and his plays—Character of Plautus' plays; their influence on Roman literature—Second century B.C.: Statius Cecilius—Terence: his plays, their character—The Prologue—Lucius Lavinius and Turpilius—Actors in the Palliata—Decline of this style—The *Atellana*: its origin—Characters in the Atellana—The *Togata* or Roman Comedy: its character—Titinius, Quintus Atta, and Afranius—First century B.C.: different dramatic styles; development of the Mime and the Atellana—Melissus and the Togata—Growing popularity of the Mime.

COMEDY held a more important place in Rome than Tragedy.

The earliest comic performances (after the Etrurian *Fescennina*) date back, in all probability, to the fourth century B.C. In 390 we are told that a wooden stage was erected in the circus for performances for the amusement of the people. These representations were given at the time of the national festivals, and bore the name of *Saturae*. The satura was a kind of coarse buffoonery mingled with recitation, chanting, gesture, and dance—to the accompaniment of the flute. It was enacted by wandering mountebanks, who painted their faces and were sometimes masked.

Towards 270 B.C. the Satura was replaced by

the *Mimus*. This was a facetious representation of the persons and events of the day. Its subject was always immoral, and generally obscene. The plot turned on seductions, scenes of adultery, and cheating of husbands, fathers, or persons easily imposed upon. This scurrility and corruption are strangely contrasted with an abundance of wise and moral sayings.

The Mimi were performed by one principal actor, who was at the same time the director of the troupe of secondary actors who were inferior to him, imitated him throughout, and received blows from him. The representation of female parts by women was peculiar to the Mimus, and one of the principal sources of dissoluteness.

The costume of the actors in the Mimus was much like that of the modern harlequin. Masks were necessarily excluded by the conditions of mimicry.

Generally speaking, the Mimes were little comedies, very brief, written in verse, and obeying the 'rule of the three unities.' Some two centuries later, by the talent of Laberius, they obtained a place as a distinct type in literature.

The *Palliata* is the most serious type of comedy, and that in which the literary character is the best developed. It was imitated from Greek originals, chosen by preference from the New Attic Comedy. Inaugurated in Rome towards the middle of the third century B.C. (only a few years after the appearance of the Mime), it flourished until the middle of the following century, and was illustrated by the genius of Plautus and Terence.

It was Livius Andronicus, the creator of Tragedy in Rome, who acquired the further distinction of introducing true Comedy. His earliest works, however, were no more than rude and often incomprehensible translations of Greek plays.

Naevius endeavoured to improve the type by giving it a certain character of actuality. He describes the vices and foibles of his contemporaries, but above all he loves to scoff at those in high places who affronted his democratic tendencies. The Metelluses and the Scipios were the especial objects of his sarcasm. In revenge, stringent regulations were imposed upon the writers of comedies, and Naevius was finally exiled.

Ennius, the friend of Scipio Africanus, also wrote a few Palliatae at the end of the third century; but a certain hardness in his style, inappropriate to such compositions, was against success.

Plautus was the first who can be said to have formed a true literary type in the Palliata, and to have been inspired by the rough sketches of his predecessors to create the true Comedy of Character. Marcus Accius Plautus was born at Sarsina, a village of Umbria (already latinised at this era), in 227 or 224 B.C. He came to Rome at an early age, and his first play is said to have been performed there when he was only seventeen. After amassing a considerable fortune, he ruined himself by his mad expenses in the sumptuous representation of his comedies, and was obliged for some time to labour at a hand-mill. The publication of new plays, however, reinstated his fortunes, and

he died at the age of forty or forty-three in very affluent circumstances. In order to avoid the fate of his predecessors, Plautus disguised the follies he attacked under Greek names. He understood from the outset that the indolent nature of the Romans could ill accommodate itself to the complicated situations which, in the works of his predecessors, had demanded continuous mental tension. He therefore chose the simplest possible subjects for his comedies. His characters were for the most part drawn from the inferior classes of society, from among the slaves, parasites, courtesans: all people whose coarse and obscene language was in harmony with their character. These he employed to portray the corrupt Roman society of the day, and they did it the more exactly since, under a Greek cloak, they could face official susceptibilities as well as private resentment with impunity.

There remain from Plautus the twenty plays that follow :—

(1) The *Amphitryo*, which Molière reproduced almost exactly in French, under the same title. It is believed that Plautus borrowed this subject from the Dorians.

(2) The *Asinaria*, whence Molière drew some of his ideas.

(3) The *Aulularia* (or pot-comedy, from which Molière derived the subject of *L'Avare*).

(4) The *Bacchides* (twin sisters who were courtesans).

(5) *The Captives.*

(6) The *Casina* (name of a young girl).

(7) The *Cistellaria* (or basket-play).

(8) The *Curculio* (name of a parasite).

(9) The *Epiducus* (name of a slave).

(10) The *Menaechmi* (this play was the original of that written by Regnard).

(11) The *Mercator* (or merchant; imitated from Philemon).

(12) The *Miles Gloriosus* (or braggart soldier).

(13) The *Mostellaria* (Ghost play. *Le retour imprévu*, by Regnard, is an imitation of this comedy).

(14) The *Persa* (Persian).

(15) The *Poenulus* (or Carthaginian).

(16) The *Pseudulus*.

(17) The *Rudens* (or cable; from the original comedy of Diphilus).

(18) The *Stichus* (name of a slave).

(19) The *Trinummus* (or coin; imitated from a play by Philemon).

(20) The *Truculentus* (or brutal man).

Even in flattering the evil tendencies of the Romans by a series of coarse jests, Plautus managed to preserve a certain elevation of style. His principal strength lay in vivacity of dialogue and justness of expression, set off by great good sense. Unfortunately he erred in the uniformity of his subjects, a fault for which he was severely reproached by Laharpe as follows: 'A youthful courtesan, an old man or a woman who sells her, a young man who buys her and acts the knave to get her father's money. To these add a parasite

and a blustering soldier, and you have the characters perpetually represented in the comedies of Plautus.' This criticism cannot, however, hold for all the pieces of this author, *e.g.* the *Amphitryo*, *The Captives*, the *Menaechmi*.

Plautus is further characterised by the pessimist tone in which he refers to women.

Several of his plays are preceded by a prologue. This was a species of introduction in which the author, after making a general statement of the subject, appealed to the impartiality, attention, and indulgence of the public.

Plautus took as his principal model Philemon, the poet of the New Greek Comedy, the inventor of the Comedy of Manners. But he constantly departed from his model to give play to his own personality. Plautus, in short, deserves the merit of having popularised the New Greek Comedy in Rome. After his time, the Romans delighted in the reading and study of the great comedians of Athens, and grew accustomed to seeing themselves travestied upon the stage.

The comic actor, C. Publilius, was famous in the time of Plautus for the remarkable manner in which he interpreted the principal characters in his plays.

After the death of this famous writer, his comedies were for a long time perpetuated on the stage. At the close of the second century, and during all the first half of the following, they were repeated with great success. Some authors affirm that a playbill was discovered at Pompeii bearing the title of the *Casina* of Plautus, the play having

presumably been given the evening before the destruction of the city.

Statius Cecilius, who flourished at the commencement of the second century, is the connecting link between Plautus and Terence. Nearly forty comedies are attributed to him, of which only some few fragments remain; according to Aulus Gellius they were nearly all imitated from those of Menander. Statius Cecilius was in the habit of seasoning the inventions of Menander with coarse pleasantries, which he interlarded with fine words and a few elevated maxims that excited the admiration of the people. He selected the subject of the *Amphitryo* from the same Dorian sources as Plautus.

Terence was born at Carthage, B.C. 185. Brought in his youth to Rome, he was speedily enfranchised. Some few of his plays were performed, and he then went to Greece to study. While returning to Rome he was, however, drowned at the early age of twenty-six.

Plautus feared to weary the Romans by introducing any obscure situations. Terence, on the contrary, concluding that they had made a great advance in reflective earnestness, and that gravity became them henceforward, occupied himself in complicating the sometimes over-simple intrigue of his Greek models. To this end he added a second, and even a third plot, drawn from other pieces in the New Comedy. Still, the special characteristic of the style of Terence is the fidelity with which he followed the Greek originals.

The six plays composed by this author have come down to us. They are (1) *The Andrian Woman*, represented in 166 B.C. at the Megalesia, and imitated from the *Andria* of Menander. The actor Baron, Molière's friend, wrote a play on the same subject.

(2) *The Eunuch*, after the *Eunuchus* of Menander.

(3) *Heauton Timorumenos*, or the Self-Tormentor, after Menander's play of the same name; in which occurs the famous line, '*Homo sum, et humani nihil a me alienum puto*' (I am a man, and reckon nothing human to be outside my province).

(4) The *Phormio*, or Parasite, after Apollodorus, which gave Molière the idea of the *Fourberies de Scapin*.

(5) The *Hecyra*, or Mother-in-law.

(6) The *Adelphi*, performed 160 B.C. and derived from Menander. This play suggested to Molière the *École des Maris*. It was the best of Terence's comedies.

Instead of assigning an important place to the courtesan, like his Greek models and the other authors of Palliatae, Terence relegated her to the second place. The father, of whom Plautus had made a surly, obstinate character, is transformed into an amiable and sensible being. The slave, on his side, is refined by contact with his masters, and prides himself on imitating their good manners. The parasite is no longer a disgusting glutton: he makes himself a boon-companion, and diverts his hosts by his witty sallies. Terence, an aristocrat

by temperament, is above all anxious to please the patricians, and despises the approbation as well as the criticism of the common people.

The most striking characteristics of this writer, whom Caesar calls 'a semi-Menander,' are correctness, elegance, and good taste in jesting. Unfortunately, this concern for perfect correctness leads him into a cold and monotonous style. His plays are not always well constructed, and generally err through lack of originality.

After Terence, the prologue (which in Plautus' time was exceptional) came into regular use. It was the duty of the *titulus* or public crier to recite it, and thus to make known to the mob the title of the play, the names of the author and principal actors, and of the composer of the music. In the later plays of Terence, the character of the prologue was modified. From now onwards it was employed in the setting forth of the subject by the characters themselves, and in rendering them sympathetic to the public, thus disarming criticism in advance from any unjust or ill-natured persons. It was, moreover, a sort of invitation to the spectators to listen to the end without making too much disturbance. This character was preserved by the prologue till the close of the Empire, and in the sixteenth century it was resuscitated in the same form in almost all the early dramatic essays of the Renaissance.

In the time of Terence the actors Ambivius Turpio and Hatilius Praenestinus achieved celebrity by their admirable interpretation of the plays of this great Roman comedian.

It should be noted that the use of the mask upon the stage was regularly adopted from the time of Terence.

The other writers of Palliatae contemporary with Terence are Lucius Lavinius, who translated several plays of Menander, and Turpilius, who produced successful representations of plays translated from the Middle and New Comedy.

The Palliata was divided into portions in dialogue, and monodies to be sung. The delivery consisted partly of declamation, partly of recitative and song. These two last were accompanied by the tibia, or flute.

The actors in the Palliatae were eight or nine in number, and wore costumes by which they could be recognised at first sight. The slave was clad in a short tunic and a little cloak. The parasite was enveloped in a large cloak; sometimes he wore a bandage on one eye, or was quite blind of it. The roisterer had a red scarf, and a little cap on his head. As in Athens, young men took the female parts, and it is believed that they wore elegant Greek tunics.

The Palliatae closely resembled the Atellanae. The only serious difference between these two styles of comedy is, that whereas the characters in the Palliata are general types such as the parasite or the roisterer, those in the Atellana are grotesque individualities, in the style of Punch or Harlequin.

The coarse or obscene details which abound in the pieces by other writers of Palliatae contributed not a little to the success of this style of comedy.

Terence, wishing to give it a more refined and delicate tone, had alienated the sympathies of a public which craved for violent sensations. The type succumbed, and was definitely replaced by the Atellanae, the Togatae, and the Mimes, which at this period were often employed as *Exodia*, or after-plays.

The *Atellana*, imported from the small town of Atella from which it derives its name, was introduced into Rome about the year 211 B.C., after the conquest of Campania. Originally it had rather the character of an interlude than of a comedy, properly so-called. The first performers were, in fact, only the village clowns, who came in the intervals of the play to perform rude dances in their rustic clothes. They had no fixed salary, and a collection made among the spectators constituted their only source of remuneration. Little by little their comedy roused interest, and a tribune was erected in front of the stage for their performance.

From the second century the Atellana was recognised as a genuine mode of comedy. It now became a farce, designed to excite the laughter of the crowd at any cost, even at the expense of probability. The plot was in most cases presented as a simple dialogue, the development being left to the improvisation of the actors. Songs in Saturnian metre were sometimes interspersed. The jokes were coarse, accompanied by lively gesticulation, which was also obscene; the diction bore a plebeian character. It is presumably on this account that Horace proposed to replace the Atellana by intro-

ducing the Satyric Drama, which did not exist in Roman literature, as an after-piece.[1]

The chief characters of the Atellana were the *Maccus*, a peasant of coarse and wanton habits, with a monstrous head, enormous nose, and double hump (the original of *Punch*); the *Bucco*, or gobbler; the *Parasite*, ready to play any dirty trick; the *Pappus*, or pantaloon, who is constantly mixed up in intrigue, and as regularly outwitted; the *Stupidus*, who had the finest part, and passes readily from inanities to witty invective, and developed into the *Fool* of the mediaeval farces; lastly the *Sanniones*, whose character was not sharply defined. They were mostly buffoons, and their part consisted in grimaces.

The *Togata* (*tabernaria* of a later date) is an essentially indigenous product; owing nothing to Greece, it differs more especially in this point from the Palliata. Instead, moreover, of devoting itself like the latter to the representation of the upper classes, the Comedy of the Toga deals more particularly with the lower orders of Roman society. Leaving aside the parasites, courtesans, and slaves of the Palliata, it introduces honest women; and the young girl now appears on the scene, for to the Togata was due the introduction of the family upon the stage. This style of comedy flourished during the latter half of the second century B.C. and the first quarter of the following century.

[1] For this account of the Atellana, see Teuffel and Schwabe, *History of Roman Literature*, Warr's translation, 1891, pp. 12-13. Livy gives a somewhat different account.—*Translator.*

The first known author of Togatae is Titinius, contemporary with Terence. Of the fifteen pieces which he composed, a few insignificant fragments only have come down to us. Titinius is distinguished by the vigour of his style, which has often been compared to that of Plautus. Quintus Atta, one of the most ancient writers of Togatae, composed a number of comedies, of which unfortunately no trace remains. The most famous writer in this mode is, however, Afranius, whose works were very popular at the end of the second century. His subjects, while essentially Roman, recall in their manner of treatment the works of Menander. His correct and elegant style has much in common with that of Terence.

During the first century B.C. there was a complete dearth of comedians: the Palliatae of the previous century were accordingly in vogue, more especially those plays of Plautus in which the famous actor Roscius acquired a great reputation. At this time the Roman knight Laberius applied himself to perfecting the Mime, of which he made a literary genus. This style of comedy now became the most popular entertainment, for the people found in it a faithful picture of the abuses of the capital.

The talent of the actor and mime-writer, Publius Syrus, gave him considerable renown upon the stage. The Atellana at the same time developed, under Novius and Pomponius of Bologna, into a regular comedy, a written play, no part of it being any longer left to that improvisation which had in the previous century been its chief characteristic.

The subject was mythological; the play, however, exhibited some actuality, inasmuch as it was full of allusions to the popular manners of the era, and was even directed against certain well-known personalities. The characters of Novius and Pomponius are often taken from the world of art and trade. The plays of Novius are specially remarkable for their many pictures of child-life. As soon as the Atellana acquired this serious character, it was employed as an *Exodium* at the end of the representations of Palliatae.

During the second half of the first century B.C., Comedy flickered up for the last time in the hands of Melissus, who invented a new type called the *Trabeata*, which was not followed up. The Mime now dominated all other styles, and its popularity steadily increased with the extraordinary magnificence of the *mise en scène*, and the voluptuous acting of the comedian Bathyllus. From this era, too, dates the custom of attaching posters to the door of the theatre to attract an audience, by representing either the characters in the play or one of its most interesting scenes; while, lastly, it was in the reign of Augustus that women were in the majority of cases interdicted from entering the theatres.

IV

THE THEATRE IN THE FIRST CENTURIES OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

First century of the Christian era: the Pantomime: its character and points of relation with the Greek theatre—Its immorality—Second century A.D.: Vergilius Romanus and the comedy of Menander—Popularity of the Pantomime: protests of the Church against the Theatre—Third and fourth centuries: the Theatre in the East: the *Exodus* of Ezekiel—The Christian dramas of Apollinarius and of S. Gregory Nazienzenus—The Theatre in the Western Empire—Cultivation of the Pantomime—Position of the actors—Occasional performances of the plays of Plautus, Terence, Seneca—Actresses in the literary repertory—Fifth century: representations of the *Eunuch* and the *Amphitryo* in Rome—Desertion of the theatres; gladiatorial games—Last performances of literary plays—Vestiges of the Mimes in the ninth century—Total disappearance of dramatic spectacles—The *Accademia dei Litterati* and Latin Comedy—Sixth and seventh centuries in the East: the Hippodrome of the Lower Empire—Religious character of the play, and other details.

From Tiberius to the end of the Empire, Comedy properly so-called disappeared, to make way for the Mimes of the preceding century and for a new class of play, the Pantomime.

At the beginning this new mode was a kind of Mime, in which poses and gestures constituted the fundamental portion of the play. Words occupied a secondary place, and eventually disappeared altogether. Only the music was preserved, and in order that the audience might understand the gestures of the actors, little books were distributed

in Greek text, intelligible only to the learned and to the upper classes. Later on the mask—rejected by the Mime—was adopted, and a chorus was employed to accompany the comedian with their voices, and to explain the multiple gestures by which the actors created the different characters in turn. Moreover, there was a company of mute players. The *libretto* left almost unlimited liberty of detail. Sometimes the music broke off to enable the actor to finish his *fioritura* and variations. Sometimes, on the other hand, the comedian paused, or left the stage, while the story was taken up by the recitative and the instruments.

This style of play was so much relished by the public that the whole Greek Theatre, Satyric Drama included, was translated into Pantomime. This was accordingly of two kinds: serious and light pantomime. The actor Pylades became famous in the first style, Bathyllus in the second.

By the close of the first century of the Christian era, Pantomime reached a revolting degree of immorality. The poets Martial and Juvenal—whose writings date from this epoch—tell us that 'when one of the characters of the pantomime had to expiate a crime, the director borrowed a criminal from a neighbouring prison, who was tortured before the eyes of the public.' They add that the stage was at times transformed into a scene of genuine debauch. And yet it was at this period that the position of actor, which had been somewhat degrading, enjoyed a certain consideration.

In the second century of our era there appears to have been an attempt to resuscitate the comedies of Menander. Pliny the younger, in fact, mentions in his letters a poet named Vergilius Romanus, who wrote some comedies in the style of this author. The plays of Vergilius were unsuccessful, and he had no imitators.

The Gladiatorial Games and the immoralities of the Pantomime were rivals in the public favour. The Church, on the other hand, was not slack in using her influence to declaim, in the name of morality, against these prostitutions of the stage. She had even some interest in its total disappearance, seeing that the Drama had issued from paganism, and was still directly connected with it.

In proportion as Christianity became grafted upon the Roman Empire, the bishops redoubled their severity with regard to the patrons of the play, and above all to the actors. It was decreed at the Council of Arles (314 A.D.) that 'by mounting the stage the actors of Comedy gave their support to the worship of the false gods, and deserted their faith.' They were in consequence threatened with excommunication if they persisted in this heretical profession.

When in 330 A.D. Constantine transported the seat of the Roman Empire to Constantinople, the Mime and Pantomime became, both in this city and in Antioch (the ancient capital of Syria), the favourite spectacle of the people, and the immorality of these performances yielded nothing to those of Rome. Again the Church put forth all

her strength to attack the Theatre, and decreed that the Roman senators should not marry actresses; at a later time this law was abrogated by Justinian.

At the close of the fourth century the function of actor had become so despicable that, in 394 A.D., the Emperor Theodosius published a law, by the terms of which 'images of actors should, out of respect for his person, be removed to a distance from his statues.'

The rise of Christianity had nevertheless provoked some essays in Christian Drama, and these first signs of resurrection of the stage, under the auspices of the new religion, came from the East.

The first drama in which the subject was taken from the Scriptures is the *Exodus*, or departure of the Israelites from Egypt under their leader and prophet Moses. The principal characters are Moses, Zipporah, and God speaking from the burning bush. Moses delivers the prologue or introduction in a speech of eighty lines, and his rod is turned into a serpent on the stage. The author of this piece is Ezekiel, a Jew, who is supposed to have lived at the end of the second century; the exact date of the composition is uncertain. The interest of the question lies in the almost universally admitted fact that the *Exodus* issued from Palestine, and that consequently the taste for the theatre had, at the commencement of the Christian era, penetrated to these obscure regions. Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (in Palestine), have preserved numerous fragments of this work, which

have been added to the collection of manuscripts entitled *Poetae Christiani Graeci.*[1]

Between 361 and 363 A.D. the Emperor Julian interdicted the study of Greek and Latin letters to Christians, and Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea, and a famous scholar of the day, set himself to the composition of tragedies and comedies after the manner of Menander and Euripides, the subjects being drawn from the Old and New Testaments—hoping thus to obviate the disastrous effect of the Emperor's decree.

Later on he was accused of heresy, and his works were destroyed. After the death of Julian the Apostate, the Christians wrote a few comedies, but none of these are extant. At the same period S. Gregory Nazianzenus, Archbishop of Constantinople, composed several sacred dramas, among them *The Passion of Christ*, the only one that has come down to us. It is tolerably certain that these pieces, written in verse on the model of the Greek tragedies, were never played in the theatres of Constantinople, but were simply designed as readings for the students in the Christian schools.

In the Empire of the West, on the contrary, there was no such attempt to revive the serious drama under any form whatsoever. The Pantomime had always been the favourite entertainment of the people, and this style of play was so highly appreciated even by the aediles that when, accord-

[1] A Latin translation of this piece exists in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, under the title: *Ezekieli Tragici Exagoge, Tragedia sacra Latinis versibus expressa et notis illustrata, per Fed. Morellum, Parisiis,* M.D.LXXXX.

ing to the Latin historian, Ammianus Marcellinus (died 390 A.D.), 'at a period when Rome was menaced with famine, all strangers—including the most learned professors—were obliged to leave the city, three thousand ballet-dancers of different nationalities were authorised to remain.' It is to be noted that this love of the theatre was shared by Christians as well as pagans. The actors were regarded as indispensable ministers to the pleasures of the people, to such a point that the functions of the comedian were legally hereditary in families, and obligatory from generation to generation. Thanks, however, to the energy of S. Ambrose, a law was passed at the end of the fourth century, which enabled the actors to escape from this slavery by publicly embracing the Christian religion.

This passion for pantomime was carried even further in Africa.

There were, however, some few revivals of the old repertory in Rome and in the Roman provinces. During the first four centuries the tragedies of Seneca were played from time to time, as well as the comedies of Plautus and Terence; but these performances were the recreation of the lettered, that is to say, of an infinitesimal minority.

At the close of the fourth century, real actresses made their appearance in the plays of Terence, and contributed by their acting to the success of the comedy.

At the commencement of the fifth century, under the reign of Valentinian III., the *Eunuch* and the

Amphitryo were still represented at Rome. S. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, complains of it in the *De Civitate Dei.* In the provinces at the same period the Christians had abjured the theatre, out of hatred for paganism, and the playhouses were falling into ruins. Still, the poet Sidonius Apollinaris (died 482 A.D.) speaks of the Pantomime as an entertainment in full vigour. He even gives a description of a pantomime acted in a theatre at Narbonne, in which the most immoral tales of mythology were explained by the aid of obscene gestures.

Otherwise, the mass of the Roman populace no longer cared about dramatic entertainments. Its affections were entirely transferred to the *Ludi circenses*, or horse-and-chariot races, and combats of animals. At Rome and at Ravenna some few theatres were still standing, but they were not kept up. Salvian, historian and Gallic priest, tells us in his *De Providentia Dei* that at the close of the fifth century, the barbarian Emperor Theodoric had to restore the theatre of Marcellus in Rome; and it was probably at the same epoch that the last representations of literary plays were given there.

The seventh century doubtless witnessed the disappearance of the Gladiatorial Games, as well as of the Theatre properly so-called. It seems, however, that there were vestiges of the Mimes in the ninth century, for Leo IV., elected pope in 847 A.D., protests, in an instruction to the faithful, against songs that had a mimic character. At this point

our information as to the fortunes of the theatre ceases, for the period of the foreign invasions.

From this epoch onwards the Drama, as it were annihilated under the attacks of Christianity, must be held to have expired. And yet this same religion in the twelfth century was to undertake the resurrection of that which it had effectually ruined.

As for Latin Comedy, it was destined to be resuscitated in Italy only in 1470, by the initiative of the literary society, the *Accademia dei Litterati*, which in that year produced the plays of Plautus and Terence in Rome.

At Constantinople the Mime and Pantomime were completely abandoned from the fifth century, public taste being all in favour of the entertainments of the Hippodrome. From this date the hippodrome may be regarded as the only theatre of the Lower Empire, but it was not till the sixth and seventh centuries, in the reigns of Marcian, Anastasius, Theodora, and Justinian; of Maurice, of Phocas, and of Heraclius, that the passion for chariot-races became a frenzy. The Hippodrome in Constantinople, a magnificent building of its kind, founded by the Emperor Septimius Severus, was about 400 yards in length and nearly 70 yards broad, and the tiers were capable of containing one hundred thousand spectators. A point to be noted is, that under its new aspect the play had preserved something of the religious character of the Ancient Drama. Before the commencement of the races the Emperor rose in his tribune, and taking in his hand

a fold of the imperial mantle, signed the cross over his people. As with the Athenians, a place of honour was reserved in the theatre for the high priest, the Greek patriarch namely, surrounded by all his clergy. The choristers of the church of S. Sophia joined with the Byzantine choirs in singing religious hymns to the glory of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, the virtues of the Emperor, and the dexterity of the drivers. As on the days of dramatic contests in Athens, so in Constantinople the days of the races were public holidays. All classes of society, strangers from every part of the East, ambassadors from foreign nations, were invited to the function. At each performance there were four chariot-races, with interludes between each, consisting either of pantomimic scenes, played by proper comedians, or of acrobatic exercises. At certain festivals, and to commemorate the ancient Greek and Latin rejoicings, the heads of parties transformed themselves into actors, and as in the early days of Sicilian comedy, launched quips and insults at one another like the Greeks of the sixth century B.C. at the close of the vintage, when they celebrated Dionysus. The spectators usually furnished themselves with provisions for the Hippodrome, but from time to time the Emperor offered a kind of banquet to one hundred thousand guests, who threw themselves greedily upon the heaps of vegetables, ham, and fruits.

Such were the theatrical distractions of Constantinople; and as in Rome the gory spectacles of the Amphitheatre had arrested the development of

Tragedy, so under the Lower Empire the unbridled passion of the Greek and Roman populace for the chariot races made any kind of dramatic literature impossible.

The entertainments at the Hippodrome began to lose their importance in the tenth century, and by the fourteenth the theatre was in ruins.

V

THE THEATRE OF ANTIQUITY AND THE MODERN STAGE

In France.—Ancient Tragedy at the Odéon and the Comédie-Française—*Les Erynnies* of Leconte de Lisle in the Roman theatre of Orange—Adaptation of the plays of Aristophanes, Plautus, and Terence to the French stage.

In England.—Tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides in London and Dublin—Performances of Greek and Latin plays in Schools and Universities—Open-air theatre at Bradfield College—The Pantomime.

In France

The year 1844 was in France the signal for the definite adoption in the leading theatres of a style forgotten for three hundred years; which style, moreover, even in the sixteenth century, had flourished only in the private theatres of a few colleges. This was the Ancient Drama, under the form of translations or adaptations from the original text, in the setting of the Greek tragedies of the fifth century B.C.

The first impulse to the movement was given by MM. Paul Meurice and Vacquerie, who, on May 21, 1844, produced the *Antigone* of Sophocles (almost literally translated) with Greek costumes and accessories.

Encouraged by the success of the Sophocles play, M. Hippolyte Lucas produced at the Odéon,

March 16, 1847, a tragedy entitled *Alceste*, an adaptation from Euripides.

In 1858 the Comédie-Française gave the 'first night' of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, translated by M. Lacroix, the success of which was considerable.

In 1873 the distinguished poet Leconte de Lisle obtained a representation at the Odéon of his famous tragedy, *Les Erynnies*, a very original work, the subject of which was taken from the trilogy of Aeschylus—*The Agamemnon*, *The Eumenides*, *The Libation Bearers*. The play of the French poet has all the sombre majesty as well as the force of the original. Far from modifying the horror of the Antique Drama, Leconte de Lisle has exaggerated it by making his *Erynnies* a condensation of all that was most violent in the Greek theatre, and suppressing whatever in Aeschylus' tragedy had palliated the barbarism of the other parts. The play had a great success in Paris. But this was far exceeded by the effect produced by *Les Erynnies* upon the thirty thousand spectators who witnessed it at Orange on the site of the great Roman open-air theatre. For some years past the *Antigone* and the *Œdipe Roi* from Sophocles have been included in the repertory of the House of Molière, where they are enacted with a thoroughly Greek *mise en scène*. The part of Oedipus, colossally interpreted by Mounet-Sully, is one of the finest creations of this great tragedian. In the *Antigone* his success is shared by another great artist, Mme. Bartet. The *Antigone* and *Œdipe*

Roi thus rank among the choicest spectacles of the first theatre in Europe.

The last Greek tragedy performed at the Odéon was *Les Perses* from Aeschylus, played in 1896.

The comedies of Aristophanes have likewise been put under contribution for the French stage. A *Lysistrata*, adapted by M. Donnay from the Greek original, was played in 1891 at the Eden Theatre (now done away with), and obtained a certain success, thanks to the masterly interpretation of Madame Réjane, who took the principal part. The Odéon also gave some performances of *Plutus* in December 1896, an adaptation from the Greek comedy, by M. Paul Gavault. This piece of ancient comedy was unfortunately presented in the garb of modern comedy, and even in the vernacular; hence it was debased to the level of mere parody, and met with only a moderate success.

Of late years several experiments have been made in translating, or rather in adapting, the plays of Plautus and Terence for the stage, but the Latin comedies received a very different reception from the public from that accorded to the Greek drama.

On January 8, 1897, an attempt was made to perform two pieces in the same evening at the Odéon: *Le Cable*, the *Rudens* of Plautus, and *La Belle-Mère*, the *Hecyra* of Terence. But both these plays, notwithstanding the clever adaptations of M. Jean Destrem for the first, and of M. Marcel

Luguet for the second, fell flat, and failed to interest the audience.[1]

In England

The plea made in 1844 at the Odéon in favour of the resuscitation of the Ancient Drama was echoed on the other side of the Channel, and in 1845 the Covent Garden Theatre, in London, gave an English version of the *Antigone* of Sophocles, approximating as nearly as possible to the appointments of the old tragic stage. The experiment was successfully repeated several times. From London the play passed over to the Theatre Royal of Dublin, where the well-known actress, Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) obtained a real triumph. This encouraging result induced the manager of the Dublin theatre to bring out *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, from Euripides, which was also favourably received. And in 1876 some very successful performances of the *Antigone* were given at the Crystal Palace, when Miss Genevieve Ward acted the part of Antigone. Notwithstanding these successes, there were no further revivals of Greek plays in the theatres of Great Britain. The year 1881, however, saw the revival of Greek drama in the original text, as performed in several universities and colleges. The first impulse was given by the

[1] Mention must also be made, among other imitations of the Greek and Latin plays of antiquity, of the tragedies and comedies (*Fabulae dramaticae*) of Père Porée, Voltaire's teacher. Unfortunately, the author always refused to give them to the Theatre, and they were only played in the Jesuit colleges by the students. One of his best tragedies, *Le Martyre de Saint Agapit*, was performed at the Collège Louis-le-Grand on March 1, 1710, as well as on March 20, 1737.

performance of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, at Oxford, where the now well-known actor, Benson, made his first success upon the stage. In 1882 the University of Cambridge responded with the performance of the *Ajax* of Sophocles, and since then Greek plays have been given annually in one or other of the colleges.

Perhaps the most interesting of all these plays are the performances at Bradfield College, Berkshire. Here the Warden, Dr. Gray, has constructed an open-air theatre, modelled on that of Dionysus at Athens. The seats are cut out of a chalk-pit on the slope of the hill, and small mats are provided for the spectators. The effect of the outdoor performance, with all its Greek accessories, is most striking. In 1890 and 1898 the *Antigone* of Sophocles was performed; in 1892 and 1900 the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus; in 1895 the *Alcestis* of Euripides (which was also given in 1881, in the College dining-hall).

Greek comedy is acted as well as Greek tragedy in the Universities. Cambridge, in 1883, gave *The Birds* of Aristophanes, with splendid stage accessories; and on subsequent occasions *The Frogs*, *The Knights*, and *The Wasps* have been successfully performed under similar conditions.

Nor are the comedies of Plautus and Terence less popular than the Greek plays, especially in the public schools. Performances of these authors are frequently given in the original text. At Westminster School, in particular, it is an ancient custom (dating back to the sixteenth century) to

give an annual representation of a comedy by Terence.

We may conclude this chapter with some mention of the Pantomime, which now takes an important place on the English stage, and is to some extent the descendant of the Roman Pantomime. John Rich, one of the earliest managers of the Covent Garden Theatre, was the first to introduce this style, which is now a national institution. After a few preliminary harlequinades, John Rich presented, on December 20, 1723, a true Grand Pantomime, called *The History of Dr. Faustus*, which achieved considerable success. From this date the Pantomime became one of the regular forms of English drama. Many of the principal theatres are annually given up at Christmas, and for the five or six weeks following, to this style of performance, which perhaps exceeds all others in popularity. The *mise-en-scène* at the Drury Lane Theatre, in London, is magnificent, and in the provinces Bristol is noted for its effective scenery and rich costumes.

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

I

LITURGICAL DRAMA, MIRACLE PLAYS, AND COMEDY BEFORE THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Historical sketch—Nature of public entertainments between the sixth and eleventh centuries—Dramatic compositions of Hroswitha—Eleventh century: the *Feast of Fools*; its origin—Carols—The Trope—First liturgical drama: *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*—Twelfth century: *Drama of the Prophets*—The *Fête des Ânes*—Compositions of Hilarius—Liturgical drama and Church festivals—The Miracle Play: *Le Drame d'Adam et d'Ève*—Thirteenth century: Provençal poets—Religious drama outside the Church: *Le Jeu de Saint Nicolas*—Earliest Guilds, and open-air theatres — Appearance of comedy: *Le Jeu d'Adam ou de la Feuillée.*

In the year 359 A.D. the Franks (most formidable of the barbarian hordes that ravaged the West) obtained from the Emperor Julian the right to settle along the left bank of the Rhine, and to occupy Belgium as Allies of the Empire. But, in 486, Clovis, the head of the tribe of Salic Franks, invaded Roman Gaul (where Syagrius was at that time reigning under the nominal authority of Zeno, Emperor of the East), and, as victor at the battle of Soissons, brought all the other Frankish tribes beneath his sceptre. Placing himself at their head, he took possession of Roman Gaul, and in 500 founded the Empire of the Franks, with Paris for his capital.

Upon the death of Clovis the Frankish Empire was parcelled into several little kingdoms, administered in succession by the descendants of the king. This state of things was prolonged down to 771, at which epoch Charlemagne extended his dominion over the different parts of the Frankish Empire. In 843 this empire was finally divided into three parts—Germany, Italy, and lastly France, which was handed over to Charles the Bald.

During all this lapse of time, and down to the close of the tenth century, every trace is lost, not merely of theatrical performances properly so called, but of all kinds of dramatic composition, in the West.[1] Chilperic, King of the Franks, had indeed, in 577, constructed circuses at Paris and at Soissons, but it was seldom that any save mountebanks and dancers performed there. As professional comedians, between the seventh and ninth centuries, there were only the *jongleurs* or nomad singers, who mounted on rude trestles to declaim verses, and gesticulated to the sound of instruments. Towards the ninth century, according to certain historians of the period, the jongleurs' games acquired a certain dramatic character. Dialogue succeeded to simple recitation, and several singers simultaneously acted pious scenes drawn from the legends of the saints, and entitled *Urbanae cantilenae* (historical canticles).

But we cannot, in the writings and gestures of

[1] In January 1900 the commission of 'Vieux Paris' agreed to excavate in the Rue Racine the remains of a Gallo-Roman theatre. This theatre had been partly discovered in 1861, during the construction of the kitchens of the College of S. Louis.

these jongleurs, pretend to see any link between the Ancient Drama and the Drama of the Middle Ages. At most it might be possible to regard these nomad singers as the earliest of the professional actors, whose successors were summoned in the sixteenth century to take part in a notable competition before the members of the different corporations.

It was a Benedictine of the House of Gandersheim in Saxony, named Hroswitha, to whom we owe the earliest plays composed in the West, at the close of the tenth century. This nun was the author of six Latin dramas, imitated from Terence, which are not without value. Her works, written for the greater glory of chastity, have as their theme the legendary history of saints and confessors.[1] The dramas of Hroswitha were never performed in public; they were merely acted in the convent before the sisters. These compositions are really dramatic in character, but they stand as an absolutely isolated fact in the history of the Theatre in the Middle Ages, at least before the eleventh century. Since, moreover, these plays were founded on a pagan model, they exercised no influence upon the character of religious drama.

The *Feast of Fools* was the first expression of the dramatic element in the bosom of the Church. Cedranus, one of the most celebrated of the Byzantine historians, who flourished about 1050, tells us

[1] See, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the first edition of these plays, printed in 1591, at Nuremberg, under the rubric: *Opera Hrosvite illustris virginis et monialis germane gente saxonica orte nuper a Conrado celte inventa.*

that at the end of the tenth century the Eastern Church occupied itself in weaning the minds of the people from the pagan ceremonies, particularly the Bacchanalia and calendary solemnities, by the substitution of Christian spectacles, partaking of the same spirit of licentiousness. According to the same author, Theophylact, patriarch of Constantinople, introduced the practice in 990, in the Greek churches, of the Feast of Fools, as well as other farces of a similar character. The function usually took place at Christmas, but sometimes on the 1st or even the 12th of January. This custom was speedily adopted in France, where we find it flourishing in the eleventh century. Thenceforward it was the custom to elect, at the date of the ancient Saturnalia, *i.e.* between the 6th and 18th of December, a Bishop or Archbishop of Fools. The period of these rejoicings (which lasted for three consecutive days) began before Christmas, and was prolonged during the Feast of the Innocents, of the Circumcision, and of the Epiphany. The newly elected prelate, clad in pontifical vestments, and followed by a long train of ecclesiastics dressed up as mimes or as buffoons, entered the church, where he celebrated mass in the presence of the faithful, many of whom were disguised as monsters. During the religious ceremony some chanted obscene songs in the choir, while others ate and drank near the altar. The mass over, the Bishop of Fools, in a carriage, paraded the streets of the town in procession.

It was also during the Christmas festival that the

rejoicings called *Carols* took place in the churches. These consisted in songs and dances, or rather gallops, which began in the choir, and continued down the nave, ending as a rule in the graveyard.

These revels were of such an unseemly character that a Council assembled at Rome in the eleventh century, decreed that the priests must warn the men and women who assembled in the churches on festival days, that they should not unite in dances, with singing and leaping, after the manner of the pagans.

Finally, a little after the year 1000, we discover the earliest germs of Liturgical Drama in the *Trope*, its first timid manifestation. The two most ancient tropes known to us are as follows: the first, '*Quem quaeritis in praesepe* (manger), *pastores, dicite ?*—Respondent, *Salvatorem Christum Dominum,*'—being interpolated in the Christmas office; the second, '*Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, O Christicolae,*'—Respondent, *Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum,*'—in the Easter office.

During the greater part of the eleventh century Liturgical Drama excluded all invention, and admitted only transcripts from the Holy Scriptures: it was a simple drama, entirely in prose. But, from 1080 onwards, some versification was introduced, and then, on the appearance of the vulgar tongue, we find dramas, half French, or Provençal, and half Latin.

The most ancient of these liturgical dramas is that entitled *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*, a mixture of Latin and French (*langue d'oc*, along

with a few words of *langue d'oïl*). This drama appears to be contemporaneous with the *Chanson de Roland*, is prefaced by a Latin prologue, and commences thus—

'Oiet virgines, aiso que vos dirum ;
Aiscet presen que vos commandarum ;
Attendet un espos, Jhesu salvaire a nom
Gaire no i dormet.'

Lines which may be translated—

'Virgins, hearken to our lay,
List to our commandment.
Wait your spouse, hight Jesu Saviour,
Never slumber.'

Another no less celebrated liturgical drama is that of *The Prophets*, which was entirely in rhymed Latin verse, and in its earliest form dates from the year 1100. This play underwent numerous transformations, and became the *Fête des Ânes*, which was performed at Rouen with extraordinary pomp. This feast was instituted in honour of the ass privileged to carry our Saviour. It was celebrated on Christmas Day. Balaam, mounted on a wooden ass in which a living person was enclosed, entered the church in procession, followed by the Prophets, six Jews, and six Gentiles. The mass then began, and during the ceremony a hymn was sung in honour of the ass, with the following refrain taken up by the faithful—

'Hez, sire asne, car chantez
Belle bouche rechinez
Vous aurez du foin assez
Et de l'avoine à plantez.'

In the course of the service the Gloria Patri and the Credo were followed by the cry *hee-haw*, repeated three times by the priest, who also employed the same formula instead of the *Ite missa est*.

According to the MSS. of the Abbey of Saint-Martial, where *The Wise and Foolish Virgins* and *The Prophets* are preserved, this latter play required twenty-seven characters, a funeral-pile, and the representation of a fire; indicating that the *mise-en-scène* even in the bosom of the Church was of some importance.

Hilarius, the disciple of Abélard, was the author of two plays famous in the twelfth century: *Historia de Daniel representanda* and *Suscitatio Lazari*. The first, which is wholly in Latin, betrays the invasion of profane elements into the liturgical drama, for it presents the queen, Daniel, soldiers, nobles, etc. The second, which is a mixture of Latin and French, contains valuable indications as to the staging, and from the details given, we may conclude that the performances in the church in no wise differed from those of the theatre proper. In effect, we find a bed on which Lazarus was lying, his sisters Mary and Martha arriving in company with four Jews; we are told that these visitors sat near the sick man and sang to him, etc.

Since the admission of Liturgical Drama into the Church was designed to enhance the attractions of the religious offices, its dramatic character was most pronounced at the chief festivals of Christmas, Easter, the Epiphany, the Ascension, and Pente-

cost. At Easter, for instance, the priests acted the part of the three Holy Women, covering their faces with veils to complete the illusion. At the Ascension, a priest equipped with wings, climbed to a gallery outside the church, and simulated an ascent into heaven.

Among all the liturgical dramas, that of the Resurrection of Christ, inscribed in a MS. of the Abbey of Saint-Martial, under the title of *La Nuit de Pâques*, was the most often represented.

Along with the Liturgical Drama, another dramatic type of a religious character developed from the twelfth century. This was the Miracle Play, which concerned itself with the miraculous life of the saints. At the outset the miracle play assumed the form of a chanted dialogue to celebrate the glory of the saint and to exalt his virtues. This kind of play was nearly always performed on the outside gallery of the church. Exception, however, was made in favour of a Miracle of S. Paul and a Play upon the Image of S. Nicolas, which were honoured within the sanctuary, notwithstanding their essentially lay character. The text of the Gospel being now no more than a canvas upon which profane legends were embroidered, it was felt necessary to bring the drama out from the Church. A few liturgical dramas were, however, composed till the close of the thirteenth century, and were represented in the churches, particularly at Rouen, Aix, Bourges, Bayeux, and Lisieux.

The most important work of the twelfth century is perhaps the *Drame d'Adam et d'Ève*, which

may be regarded as a link between the Liturgical Drama and the Mystery Play. This composition, the work of a Norman author, dates back to the first part of the twelfth century, and is really the first religious play written in French, while it is at the same time the most characteristic of the performances which were then beginning at the doors of the churches. The play is divided into three parts, accompanied by choruses, and closing with an epilogue. The first act covers the Fall of Man ; the second, the murder of Abel ; the third, the appearance of the Prophets who came as the forerunners of the Saviour. At intervals the chorus sing Latin verses, and the epilogue consists in a sermon on the need for penitence. This Mystery, which unites the three modes of tragedy, pantomime, and opera, was certainly performed, but where and by whom is unknown.

From the thirteenth century the Provençal poets began to make themselves known as writers of comedies or plays of a secular character.

The first of these poets is Armand Daniel, born 1189, at Tarascon, the author of comedies by which Petrarch was inspired. Anselme Faydix, son of a bourgeois at Avignon, also composed some comedies. From the service of Richard Coeur-de-Lion, King of England, he passed to that of the Marquis de Montferrat, at whose court his most celebrated piece, *L'Hérésie des Pères*, was performed about the year 1215. Petrarch mentions this poet.

Pierre de Saint-Remi, who belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Provence, composed

several comedies, and a satirical work directed against the inhabitants of the principal towns of France. He died in 1263.

The Provençal poets are held by some authors to be the inventors of Comedy. But this can only be granted to a certain point, for their compositions resemble satiric dialogues rather than dramatic works.

It was towards the middle of the thirteenth century that religious drama became definitively secularised. Abandoning the sanctuary and the doors of the churches, it was presented upon a kind of theatre set up for the occasion, either in the market-place or in some castle-hall. The first drama performed under these conditions (and the second to be written in French) goes by the name of the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*. It was the work of a poor poet named Bodel. From the Latin legend which celebrated the miracles of S. Nicholas he produced a real drama, which comes under the category of miracle plays, as a narrative of supernatural acts attributed to a saint. This play, written in the dialect of Northern France and performed in that district (at Arras), occupies an important position in the history of the Drama. Its author, in fact, transferred it to the time of the first crusade of S. Louis (1248), connecting it indirectly with contemporary events. By thus combining modern with ecclesiastical history, he transformed the drama into a work of realism, and determined its final emancipation.

In addition to the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*, the

thirteenth-century manuscripts afford us only one other miracle play: that of S. Theophilus, composed by Rutebeuf (about 1280). Many other miracle plays were doubtless written in the course of the thirteenth century, but no trace is left of them. Tradition, however, establishes as a fact that a miracle play of Saint-Martial was acted by the burghers of Cahors, in the cemetery of Saint-Martial, May 10, 1290.

In this connection it should be remarked that the trade-guilds had for some years previously begun to organise themselves into religious confraternities for the performance of Mystery Plays. Although in this respect competing with the ecclesiastics, these associations had the support, not only of the urban magistrates, but also of the clergy, who saw in them an instrument for the propagation of religious teaching. Permanent theatres were still unknown, and these confraternities resorted, for their performances, to scaffolding in two superposed stages. The upper of these represented Paradise, with God and the Virgin seated on a throne surrounded by the Heavenly Court. The lower platform was reserved for scenes of a secular character, and was divided by partitions, or curtains, into as many boxes as there were different localities in the play. The upper platform communicated with the lower by a circular stair at either side of the stage. By this path the celestial inhabitants descended to the lower platform when the exigencies of the piece required it. The theatre was erected in a field, a graveyard, or more rarely in the market-

place. Such was the arrangement of the earliest temporary theatres during the thirteenth century, and indeed down to the epoch at which the first poems on the Old Testament, the Passion, and the Acts of the Apostles appeared.

While the Mystery Play was thus brought out of the Church, and its secular character accentuated, Comedy tried to make its way into the Drama, and this is the most important event in the history of the Theatre in the thirteenth century.

We have seen that the plays of the Provençal poets were little more than dialogues, notwithstanding their pretentious titles of comedies.

To the poet Adam de la Halle, a native of Arras, must be attributed the honour of producing the first specimen of comedy properly so-called, in *Le Jeu d'Adam ou de la Feuillée*, composed about 1262. This production is sufficiently bizarre and inconsequent, eighteen characters being jumbled up in it, among them the author himself, his father, five burghers of the town of Arras, a Greek, a monk, a fool, a lady, an innkeeper, etc.

Despite its incoherence, this play is invested with considerable importance, from the historical as well as from the literary point of view. It teems with allusions to contemporary affairs, and covers violent attacks directed not only at the prominent personages of the town of Arras, but against the political bodies, and more particularly at Pope Alexander, who censured the marriages of clerks in holy orders with widows. The most curious part of this production is its close resemblance to

the comedy of Aristophanes, from which Adam de la Halle appears to have borrowed his bitterness, crudity of language, and even his disordered composition. We are absolutely ignorant of the conditions under which *Le Jeu d'Adam* was acted, but there is every reason to believe that it was represented in a *Puy*, that is, in one of the semi-religious, semi-secular academies, numerous enough in the Middle Ages, in which performances, half public and half private, were given, as in modern society. This play is the only important composition in the department of Comedy that the thirteenth century has bequeathed to us. We must conclude that the style created by Adam de la Halle did not survive him.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

I

LITURGICAL DRAMA AND MIRACLE PLAYS BEFORE THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Historical sketch — Twelfth century: earliest liturgical dramas: the *Feast of Fools*, the *Carol*, the *Feast of the Ass*—The first Miracle Play in England: *Ludus de Sancta Katharina*—Works of Hilarius in England — *Miracle of Saint Nicholas* — Dramatic representations in London — General character of performances at the close of the twelfth century—Thirteenth century: performances in the graveyards and market-places—First professional actors—The drama in London: *Society of Parish-Clerks* at the Guildhall—Ceremony of the *Boy Bishop*.

While Clovis, at the end of the fifth century, was creating the Frankish Empire, with Paris for its capital, the Angles and Saxons had founded the Heptarchy in Britain, thus dividing England into seven kingdoms (449-607). In the ninth century the Danish pirates, profiting by the internecine dissensions in England, invaded the country, and soon conquered it entirely. In 878 they were driven out by Alfred, and England was freed from their yoke till about the end of the tenth century. At this epoch the Danes renewed their ravages, and again possessed themselves of the whole country, till eventually their leader, Cnut, reigned paramount over England and Denmark (1014-

1036). After his death Edward the Confessor, of the line of Alfred, was recalled to the throne. But England soon fell under the yoke of another race of Norsemen—the Normans, whose leader, William the Conqueror, won the battle of Hastings (1066).

In England, as in France, the Church was the cradle of the Drama. The first allusions to the subject are later by some few years than the Norman Conquest; whence it has, rightly or wrongly, been concluded that religious drama had not existed in England prior to this epoch. However this may be, it is certain that from the early half of the twelfth century, Liturgical Drama was celebrated with great pomp within the Church, particularly at Christmas and at Easter. The first form which the Easter Play assumed was that of a ceremony in which the crucifix was solemnly buried on Good Friday, and again disinterred at Easter amid a pompous ritual. Most commonly the sepulchre in which the crucifix was deposited was a wooden erection placed within a recess in the wall or upon a tomb, but according to the interesting article, *Sepulchre*, in Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*, several English churches still contain permanent stone structures especially built for the purpose. Among these churches are those at Navenby and Heckington, Lincolnshire; Hawton, in Nottinghamshire; Northwold, in Norfolk; and Holcombe Burnell, in Devonshire. In Durham

Cathedral, on Good Friday, there was a 'marvellous solemn service,' and at St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, it survived to the end of the fifteenth century. A curious document, still extant, gives the account of the delivery to the vicar of that parish, by a certain 'Maister Canynge,' on July 4, 1470, of 'a new sepulchre well gilt with golde and a civer thereto,' with mention of '4 knights armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands; that is to say, 2 axes and 2 spears, with 2 pavés.'[1]

Of the Feast of Fools, so popular in France at the same period, traces are said to be found in England; but the first information respecting it dates from nearly two centuries later. Mr. Douce read a paper, in May, 1804, before the Society of Antiquaries, which showed that it had been celebrated in the reign of Henry IV. (about 1399), about which time also it is thought to have been abolished.

Little again is known of the Carols of this period; but it is supposed that they were not, as in France, accompanied by disorderly dances, but were merely religious chants.

Brand affirms that the Feast of the Ass was kept in the English as in the French Church, but on Palm Sunday instead of Christmas Day, as on the Continent.

'Upon Palme Sondaye they play the foles sadely, drawynge after them an Asse in a rope, when they be not moche distante from the Woden Asse that they drewe.'

. . . . . .

[1] See Pollard's *English Miracle Plays*, p. 14.

'A woodden Asse they have, and image great that on him rides,
But underneath the Asse's feete a table broad there slides,
Being borne on wheels, which ready drest, and al things meete therefore,
The Asse is brought abroad and set before the churche's doore.
. . . The people cast the branches as they passe,
Some part upon the image and some part upon the Asse;
Before whose feete a wondrous heape of bowes and branches ly:
This done, into the church he strayght is drawne full solemly.'[1]

In regard to Miracle Plays properly so-called, the first that has come down to us by name is the Latin Miracle of S. Katharine.[2]

Matthew Paris, writing about 1240 in the *Vitae Abbatum*, mentions the *Ludus de S. Katharina*, composed by Geoffrey the Norman, who died 1146, Abbot of S. Albans.

Geoffrey, a member of the University of Paris, had been invited to England to take charge of the school at S. Albans. Arriving too late, he solaced himself with the representation of the *Ludus de S. Katharina* at Dunstable, about the year 1110.

The English monk Hilarius (pupil of the celebrated Abelard), also gave performances of his Latin religious plays in England. These are the *Historia de Daniel visitanda* and the *Suscitatio Lazari* (mentioned in 'The Theatre in France,' *ante*, p. 100). He was also the author of a *Miracle of S. Nicholas*, the subject of which is the theft of

[1] *Popular Antiquities*, I. 68 *et seq.*

[2] 'In England no accurate distinction was drawn between Mysteries and Miracle plays; indeed, the former name was not in use in this country. In France the term *mystère* was applied to all religious plays indiscriminately from the fifteenth century. Properly speaking, Mysteries deal with Gospel events only; Miracle plays, on the other hand, are concerned with incidents derived from the legends of the Saints of the Church' (Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. I. p. 23).

a treasure, and its restitution by the robbers, owing to the miraculous interposition of the saint. This play is noteworthy for the old French refrain contained in each strophe. One stanza runs as follows—

'Hic res meas misi
Quas tibi commisi,
Sed eas amisi.
Ha, Nicholax! Si ne me rent ma chose
Tu ol comparras.'

Since Hilarius was the pupil of Abélard, who died in 1142, his plays were probably written and acted about the middle of the twelfth century. It would thus be in the reign of Henry II. that the first religious plays composed by an Englishman were written.

We have little information about the dramatic representations of this period, and it is not known in what towns they were given. But we learn from William Fitzstephen (who wrote about 1182) that there must have been dramatic representations in London at this time, for in his *Life of Saint Thomas à Becket* he contrasts with the theatrical spectacles of Rome the 'holier plays' of London, in which were represented the miracles and sufferings of the confessors and martyrs of the Church.

It is certain that during the twelfth century numbers of Miracle Plays were composed by priests and monks, who were the actors of their own works. But by the end of that century the English clergy had lost a great part of their influence over these performances. The schools

had their own patron saints, in whose honour the scholars began to act plays in their private halls.

In proportion as the popularity of the miracle plays increased, and stage accessories grew in importance, performances in the churches presented increasing difficulties. The churchyards for some time took the place of theatres, but the desecration of the graves by the crowds who came to witness the performance put a stop to this. The stage was then removed to the market-place, and now the members of the town corporations fulfilled the office of actor in company with the clergy, and even with the *histriones* (or jugglers) who were impressed into the service.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century, in fact, these *histriones* had constituted themselves into troops, who travelled through the country and gave public performances along with those of the trade-guilds.

In London the most distinguished interpreters of the miracle plays were the members of the Society of the Parish-Clerks of London. Stow tells us that they were incorporated into a guild or fellowship by Henry III., about 1240, under the patronage of S. Nicholas. 'It was anciently customary for men and women of the first quality, ecclesiastics and others who were lovers of church music, to be admitted into the corporation. In these ignorant ages the Parish-Clerks of London might justly be considered as a literary society. It was an essential part of their profession not only to sing, but to read (an accomplishment almost solely confined to

the clergy). Their public feasts were frequent, and celebrated with singing and music, most commonly at Guildhall Chapel or College. As yet their dramatic repertory comprised only detached plays on subjects from the Scriptures, and written either in French or Latin.'[1]

The most curious form of religious drama within the Church was the Feast of the Boy-Bishop, which, according to Warton, was very popular from the thirteenth century. This highly national function was, however, nothing more than a reproduction of the Feast of Fools, Oriental or French in origin. On the 6th of January in each year, the choristers of the cathedrals were in the habit of choosing one of their number to be Bishop. Clad in episcopal robes, the new prelate was led in great pomp to his seat in the cathedral, where the canons took their places round him. He next proceeded to the altar of the Holy Trinity and the Saints, which he blessed, and then returned to his seat to officiate at the service like an ordinary bishop. He ended the ceremony with a short discourse. The Festival of the Boy-Bishop was held only in the collegiate churches.

On December 7, 1229, the Boy-Bishop officiated at vespers before Edward I., in the chapel of Heton near Newcastle-on-Tyne. Henry VIII. prohibited the ceremony in 1542; but the edict was repealed, and it went on till 1556.

[1] Stow, *Survey of London*, ed. 1720, lib. v. p. 230, quoted by Warton, *History of English Poetry*, iii. p. 316.

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

II

MIRACLE PLAYS AND MIMED MYSTERIES IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Miracle Plays of Notre-Dame, and the *Puys*—Provençal Mysteries—The Religious Drama and the Church—Mimed Mysteries, and the first *Passion Play*—Absolute sterility of the comic vein.

Of new compositions in the fourteenth century, we know only forty-three Miracles of Notre-Dame, one secular Mystery, five Provençal Mysteries, and one Mystery of the Passion.

The religious plays of the fourteenth century were named Miracles of Notre-Dame. All bore the same character: the representation, namely, of some miraculous event produced by the intervention of Our Lady. Besides great crudity of language, these plays contained attacks upon the Pope, for which double reason their performance within the sanctuary, or at the door of the church, became an impossible matter. Hence they were always performed in the *puys*, or semi-religious assemblies, described above. Some of the Miracles of Notre-Dame give valuable information as to the manners of the nobility, the bourgeoisie, the people, and the ecclesiastical world in the fourteenth cen-

tury. The Pope, the cardinals, and the kings are presented under an aspect little favourable. The lower orders are described as cowardly, but gentle and compassionate. Women, above all married women, are treated with respect, and often play the part of sufferer, of calumniated wife, the victim of a too-credulous husband. For the rest we find many of the situations dear to modern melodrama in the theatre of the fourteenth century. The most celebrated of the miracle plays of Our Lady is *La Légende de Robert le Diable*, the primitive text of which was revised by Ed. Fournier, and represented in Paris in 1879.

The following extract shows the fourteenth-century French in which the Miracles of Notre-Dame were written—

'Guibour, dire vous vueil m'entente
Je m'en vois sanz plus faire attente
Aux champs visiter mes gaignages
Afin que d'ouvriers commes sages
Soie pourveuz sans faillir.'

In addition, we have from the fourteenth century a manuscript *Histoire de Grisélidis*. This miracle play is in reality nothing more than a pathetic little drama, which borrowed some of its characters from the legendary moralities. Lastly, five Provençal Mysteries (the most famous being that of *S. Agnes*), and one Passion Play, complete the category of fourteenth-century compositions; all of which, most probably, were performed in a *puy*. Of the *mise-en-scène* in these *puys* we only know that it was extremely complicated; there was no

division into acts, nor shifting of scenery, and the different changes of scene were indicated by means of written notices.

Throughout the fourteenth century the French and also the Latin Mystery Plays were performed in the churches and graveyards, or in the market-places, with the same ceremonial as in the thirteenth century. M. Petit de Julleville has been able to locate the performance of several of these Mysteries—more particularly those of the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, and that of S. Catherine —in the provinces, as well as in Paris, and gives definite dates between 1333 and 1402.

The invention of Mimed Mysteries again must be placed at the beginning of the fourteenth century. These plays were a kind of pantomime with a dramatic scheme, designed to celebrate national victories, or the entry of a sovereign into a city. The acting took place on scaffoldings set up along the path of the *cortège*. The first Passion Play, that is, the whole history of Jesus Christ from the Nativity to the Crucifixion, was thus represented by dumb show in 1313. A Mystery of Pentecost was played under the same conditions in Paris in 1389.

While there was but a scanty production of Religious Dramas in the fourteenth century, this sterility was even more marked on the side of Comedy, for there is not a single composition of this period worthy of the name. One poet, Eustache Deschamps, indeed gives this pretentious title to two of his works, but the first, *Le Dit des*

Quatre Offices de l'Hôtel du Roi, is little more than a morality, the principal characters of which are Panneterie, Échansonnerie, Cuisine, and Saucerie (Pantry, Cellar, Kitchen, and Sauces). This kind of piece was also called an *entremet*, because it made a sort of interlude in the royal feasts. The other production of Eustache Deschamps, *Maître Trubert et Antroiguart*, is a kind of story in dialogue. It is not likely that these plays were ever acted. They represent our only trace of Comedy in the fourteenth century: so that it is impossible to say whether there was an interruption of nearly a century and a half in Comedy, or if the works in this vein have all perished.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

II

MIRACLE PLAYS IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Earliest Miracle Plays written in English: *The Harrowing of Hell, Abraham and Isaac*—The Chester Plays; relation to the French Mysteries—The Chester Cycle, and its performance—The York Plays, and the Trade-Guilds—The *Creation of the World*; its dramatic importance—Performances in London; The 'Children of Paul's,' and Miracle Plays of the Old and New Testament—The Brothers of the Trinity, and their pageants — The Parish-Clerks of London; performances at Skinners' Well.

THE earliest dramatic composition in the English language is a dialogue poem, of a religious character, entitled *The Harrowing of Hell.* It dates from the reign of Edward II., between 1307 and 1327, and is preserved at the British Museum.

It begins as follows—

'Alle herknep to me nou
A strif wille I tellen ou,
Of Jesu and of Satan.
Po Jesu wess to Helle gan
For to fette penne his
And bringen hem to Parais.'

Which may be translated—

'All ye listen to me now
Of a strife will I tell you,
Of Jesus and of Satan.

For Jesus was to Hell gone
For to fetch in His
And bring them to Paradise.'

It is to the researches of Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith (a distinguished literary scholar) that we owe another treasure of the same kind. This is a *Mystery of Abraham and Isaac*, which she discovered in Suffolk some few years ago. This work, which must be regarded as the second specimen of an English dramatic composition, dates also from the fourteenth century (doubtless from the middle of it).

It opens thus—

'I am an angell, thou mayist be blythe
That fro hevyn to the ys senth,
Our Lord thanke the an c. sythe
For the kepyng of hys commanment.
He knouywt the wyll and also thy harte
That thou dredyst hym above all thyng.'

Translation—

'I am an angel, thou may'st be blythe,
That from Heaven to thee is sent.
Our Lord thanks thee an hundred times
For keeping His commandment.
He knows thy will and also thy heart
That thou dread'st Him above all things.'

The two manuscripts just cited are the only specimens of Miracle Plays written in the vernacular (previous to the second part of the fourteenth century) that have come down to us. We need not be astonished at the scarcity of these compositions in English, if we reflect that down to

1363 the French tongue was not merely the language of the court and upper classes, but was also employed officially in the Courts of Law.

Dramatic production as a whole made favourable progress during the fourteenth century, both the institution of the festival of *Corpus Christi* by Urban IV. in 1264, and the meeting of the Council of Vienne in 1311, having encouraged the public acting of Mystery Plays, as a means of disseminating the truths of Holy Scripture.

It is probable that the detached miracle plays had till now been written in French, although some authors affirm that they were in Latin. Collier points out that there was a distinct connection between certain Miracle Plays at Chester and the French Mysteries of the Old Testament. Thus, in the play called *De creatione mundi*, the passage relating to the formation of Eve from Adam's rib appears to be an exact translation of the French Mystery on the same subject. In *De Abraham, Melchisedech, et Loth*, the passage in which Isaac implores his father Abraham to conceal the sword with which he is to strike him, is again an almost literal translation of the French text. While in *De Mose et Rege Balak et Balaam Prophetâ* we find the lines—

> 'Come not I, Master, thyne owne asse,
> To beare thee whether thou wilt passe,
> And many winters ready was?
> To smyte me it is shame . . .
> Nay, never yet so served I thee.'[1]

[1] Collier, *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 63.

with which compare the French Mystery on the same subject—

> 'Balaam, suis je pas ta bête
> Sur qui tu a toujours été
> Tant en yver comme en esté
> Te fiez jamais telle chose.'

From all this it seems highly probable that the French Mysteries served as model for some three or four of the Chester Plays. In the remainder of these religious compositions there is nothing to give rise to the same supposition, for they all have, on the contrary, an essentially national character.

Written, as we have said, in French or Latin, the Chester Mysteries were performed in one or other of these languages till about the middle of the fourteenth century. We learn from two documents in the British Museum that Ralph Higden (the celebrated compiler of the *Polycronicon*) journeyed to Rome in 1338 to get the Pope's leave to perform the Chester Plays in English. But the authorisation was long in coming, and it was only in 1350 that this substitution of English for Latin obtained the official sanction of Rome.

At the same epoch Religious Drama underwent an important modification. Instead of performing single miracle plays, the actors linked them together into a series designed to embrace the essential parts of the Scriptures, from the Creation to the Day of Judgment, and this cycle of plays formed henceforward one complete set.

The Chester Mysteries were the first to undergo this process of amalgamation, and they formed the

celebrated cycle of Chester Plays. They were acted in a series of seven or eight at a time during the week of Pentecost—on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The actors were members of the several guilds, each entrusted with the representation of one play in the set. The drapers were charged with the *Fall of Lucifer*; 'the water-leaders and drawers of Deey' with *Noah's Flood*; the cooks with the *Harrowing of Hell.*

In order to enable as large a number of people as possible to be spectators, each play was repeated several times in different parts of the town, called 'stations,' and to this end movable scaffolds were constructed, which could be drawn by horses from point to point. 'They began first at the abay gates, and when the first pageante was played, it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the mayor, and so to every streete, and soe every streete had a pageante playing before them at one time, till all the pageantes for the daye appointed were played.'[1]

From the same period dates another and no less important collection: that of the *York Plays*, a recent and valuable discovery of Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith in the library of Lord Ashburnham, then the possessor of this unique manuscript. This series comprises forty-eight miracle plays, and must, according to Miss Toulmin Smith's calculations, have been completed about the middle of the fourteenth century. These different miracle plays follow the Scriptures very closely, and, like the other collections, refer to various Biblical events, from

[1] Archdeacon Rogers, *obiit* 1595, quoted from Pollard—*op. cit.*

the Creation to the Resurrection. We may quote, as a literary curiosity, a part of the programme adopted at the performance of one of these York Plays (in 1415—reign of Henry v.) on the festival of Corpus Christi. The procession included forty-eight 'pageants,' represented by as many different guilds defiling in order as follows :—

1. Tanners,	God the Father Almighty creating and forming the heavens, angels and archangels, Lucifer and the angels that fell with him to hell.
2. Plasterers,	God the Father creating the earth in five days.
3. Card makers,	God the Father creating Adam of the clay of the earth, and making Eve of Adam's rib, and inspiring them with the breath of life.
4. Fullers,	God forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of life.
5. Coopers,	Adam and Eve and a tree betwixt them; the serpent deceiving them with apples; God speaking to them, and cursing the serpent, and with a sword driving them out of Paradise.
6. Armourers,	Adam and Eve, an angel with a spade and distaff assigning them work.
7. Gaunters (glovers),	Abel and Cain offering victims in sacrifice.
8. Shipwrights,	God warning Noah to make an ark of floatable wood.

. . . . . .

Forty other corporations followed, consisting of the Pessoners (fishmongers), Hosiers, Spicers,

Founders, Pewterers, Orfevers (goldsmiths), Barbers, Bookbinders, etc., each charged with representing some scene from Holy Writ, *e.g.* the Birth of Christ, Massacre of the Innocents, John the Baptist, The Temptation, Transfiguration, Raising of Lazarus, the Paschal Lamb, The Passion, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost.

The forty-eighth and last pageant, that of the Mercers, was to represent the Virgin Mary, Jesus, the twelve Apostles, four angels with trumpets, four more angels with a crown, a lance, and four whips, four good and four evil spirits, and four devils.

The performance of the York Plays began between four and five in the morning. In order to meet the expenses of the stage fittings, a rate of one to two pence was levied on the craftsmen of the different guilds.

The Creation of the Universe and the Fall of Lucifer were the subject of a miracle play, and no doubt of a distinct performance, in each of the four principal cycles of mysteries. As a specimen of the dialect employed at this time, we may cite the first lines of this important religious drama, as represented annually at York, from the middle of the fourteenth century, at the festival of Corpus Christi.

First strophe—

'*Deus.*—I am gracyus and grete, god withoutyn begynning
I am maker vnmade, all mighte es in me,
I am lyfe and way vnto welth wynning,
I am formaste and fyrste, als I byd sall it be.
My blyssing o ble sall be blendyng,
And heldand fro harme to be hydande;
My body in blys ay abydande.
Vne [n] dande withoutyn any endyng.'

This play is particularly interesting, because it represents the first attempt at development of an historical situation, and thus prepares the way for the regular Drama.

In London the 'children of Paul's,' or scholars of S. Paul's School, were famed from the fourteenth century for their powers of acting, and remarkable performances of miracle plays, more particularly on the history of the Old and New Testament.

Stow also tells us of a confraternity of the Holy Trinity, founded in the forty-eighth year of the reign of Edward III. (about 1373) in honour of the Body of Christ, with the object of maintaining 'a luminary of thirteen wax candles, arranged round the sepulchre set up in the church at the time of the Feast of Easter.' The brothers gave public performances from time to time, in a kind of pageant or procession which paraded the streets of the capital. Their residence was Trinity Hall, a large foundation in Aldersgate, where also they were wont to act pious spectacles.

The most famous of the London performances in the fourteenth century, however, were those of the Parish-Clerks, who acted miracle plays in the open air. Stow says that 'the Parish-Clerks of London in 1391 performed a play at Skinners' Well, near Smithfield, in the presence of the King, Queen, and the nobles of the realm, which lasted for three days.'[1]

The Skinners' Well, near Clerkenwell (then a suburb of London), was a famous spring, and

[1] Collier, *op. cit.* i. 27.

herein we find a particular instance of the general tendency to perform religious drama round holy wells, itself a survival of pagan worship.[1]

[1] Brand remarks that 'the superstitious adoration of fountains (forbidden so early as in the sixteenth of the canons made in the reign of King Edgar, A.D. 960, as also in the canons of S. Anselm, made in the year of Christ 1102) appears to have been very prevalent in this island till the age before the Reformation, and is not even yet entirely extinguished among the Roman Catholics and the common people.'—*Popular Antiquities*, II. 223.

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

III

THE MYSTERIES OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY AND THEIR PERFORMANCE

The Spoken Mysteries: Prologue and Epilogue—General character of the Mysteries—Chief Spoken Mysteries—Popularity of Mimed Mysteries—Spoken Mysteries in the provinces: formalities anterior to the performance—Arrangement of the theatre—The *mise en scène*—Spectators and actors—The *cry* of the Mysteries—Theatrical machinery—The Mysteries in Paris—The Brothers of the Passion and the Hall of the Trinity—Confraternity of S. Crispin.

Mystery Plays properly so-called (that is, Spoken Mysteries) date from the fifteenth century. They are for the most part derived from the Old and, still more, from the New Testament; but many of them also treat of the lives of the saints. These last are particularly interesting from the details in which they abound, as to the manners and customs of certain towns or provinces, and are strikingly realistic. Generally speaking, the representation of the mystery began with a prologue, and sometimes after the prologue the fool came on to deliver himself of some buffoonery. This entry was the prerogative of the first actor, who was often the author in person. The object of the prologue was usually to announce the subject and to sum-

marise its different phases, but it often included an invitation to the actors to begin the play. The mystery was divided into 'days,' two of which, however, were often acted on the same day.

The performance frequently ended with an epilogue, which gathered up the events of the day, and also invited the spectators to come again. In addition there were, in some mysteries, short prose sermons delivered by the priests, who mounted the stage in their copes to rouse the piety of the actors and audience.

Most interesting are the glimpses of contemporary life afforded us by the Mysteries. There are numerous descriptions of domestic life, and curious details as to the habits of the unclassed, more especially the beggars and thieves. As in the Miracle Plays of the fourteenth century, the poor people nearly always played the better part, while the clergy and nobility came off rather badly. The fashionable world, the coquettes and fops, were ridiculed. The Mysteries abound in anachronisms, the inevitable consequence of the passion that their authors had for parading their literary science at any cost. Since the aim of the piece was to instruct by amusing, it was imperative to introduce the element of buffoonery, and this *rôle* was played by the secondary characters—messengers, executioners, valets, blind men, beggars, and more especially the fools. In order to rest the minds of the spectators, a Farce was, in the fifteenth century, not infrequently interpolated between two days of the mystery. The realism of certain

scenes was appalling, recalling by its brutality the horrid spectacles of the ancient Roman theatre. The executioners permitted themselves all kinds of coarse and sinister jests in presence of their victims, and endeavoured to give complete reality to the torture.

In many Mysteries the amusing parts and the serious parts occur in succession; but unlike the English Miracle Plays, which are generally characterised by frank gaiety, the French plays have somewhat of a ferocious and cruel aspect.

The most celebrated Spoken Mysteries of the fifteenth century were, in Paris, that of S. George, acted 1422; of S. Crispin, 1458; and of the Passion, played for the third and fourth time in 1473 and in 1490. In the provinces the Passion Mystery was especially in vogue at Amiens, Draguignan, Metz, Rouen, Lyons. The Mysteries of S. Catherine and S. Barbara were also acted. The vogue in the fifteenth century was, however, still for Mimed Mysteries, and under this form the Passion Mystery was performed in Paris, as on the occasions of the entry of Charles VI., Charles VII., and Louis XI. A mimed mystery was also acted at the reception of Louis XII., July 2, 1498, but it was purely allegorical in character. Under the same conditions there were performances of the Mystery of the Old and New Testament, of the Nativity, and of the Legend of S. Denis.

From the beginning of the fifteenth century Spoken Mysteries were represented in all the towns of France. In the provinces they assumed

an unheard-of splendour, the preparations for some mysteries beginning a whole year beforehand. All classes of the population contributed to the success of these immense sacred dramas, which sometimes included six hundred people. The municipality, religious confraternities, lay associations, professional actors, and even the clergy appeared on the stage.

By the fifteenth century the clergy had lost their hold on the Mysteries, but they were interested in encouraging the diffusion of religious teaching, and from this motive often took the initiative in the performances, and contributed to them by gifts in kind, or by the concession of a site, or more particularly by the loan of costumes. Still, the municipalities usually undertook the chief burden of the expenses. Sometimes a particular guild would apply their personal resources to the expense of representing a Mystery in honour of their patron saint. Sometimes, again, an entire corporation, as the Confraternity of the Holy Sacrament, of the Passion, of S. James, would transform themselves into dramatic associations, but these societies were invariably dissolved when the performances were over. Previous to any performance, superintendents were chosen who were conjointly liable for the different parts of the undertaking. These superintendents, like the actors, were shareholders, and had to give guarantees beforehand. The profits were then divided between the superintendents, the actors, and the administrators.

The theatre was usually installed in the market-

place, the court of a monastery, or the adjoining graveyard, but in certain towns the old arenas were made use of. The stage was some hundred feet wide by one hundred feet in depth. It consisted of 'mansions,' that included a number of compartments intended to figure in perspective on various planes at different heights, as heaven, hell, the world, etc. Since only the action travelled, the actors moved to the several compartments indicated by labels or inscriptions each time the scene changed, and then returned to seat themselves on the steps of the theatre. When the *mise en scène* was too complicated, its different parts were enumerated in a prologue.

The spectators were frequently accommodated in big amphitheatres with several timber stages, capable of seating eighty thousand persons. Linen sheets spread above protected audience (sitting or standing) and actors from the rain: the latter were sometimes separated from the people by a ditch filled with water, and other barriers. The show was generally free, for the municipality undertook the necessary expenses; but on some occasions an entrance-fee, varying from ten *sous* to two *francs* fifty *centimes*, according to the place, was charged. In the other case, each placed himself according to his rank and condition: the nobles and chief personages occupied the best places; the citizens and people stood or sat upon the ground, the men on the right, the women on the left, as in the churches.

The principal actors (who were mostly, as we

have said, the rich inhabitants of the town) exhibited an incredible luxury in their costumes. These belonged to the period they were living in, their chief pre-occupation being to reproduce the habits and surroundings of the epoch in which the Mystery was performed. The secondary actors usually wore ornaments lent them by the ecclesiastics. The spectators, on their side, vied in magnificence with the artists. In short, these performances of Mysteries were really society gatherings of the same character as our race-meetings. As the Mysteries often included seventy or eighty thousand lines, an interval of several days occurred between the parts. The performances were announced like royal and municipal commands in the public places of the town. This proclamation was known as the '*cry*.' The object of the proclamation was to impress the services of all men of good will.

'The art of the mechanician was fairly developed in the construction of the theatre for these Mystery Plays, although there were no changes of scene. As early as the fourteenth century, it was possible, with the aid of the improved machinery, not merely to make the actors disappear within the clouds, but also to navigate boats and run carriages round. Smoke was used to imitate night and darkness. Thunder-claps were produced by means of stones rolled about in a tub, and by the fifteenth century the progress of pyrotechnics admitted of a lightning display. The decoration of the principal mysteries was the work of the best painters, who varied their

productions *ad infinitum*. The scenes were often as gigantic as those of the modern opera. Since there were no studios in those days, the painters worked at their scenes upon the actual scaffolding. Before executing them, they proposed their scheme to the municipality, by whom they were accepted, refused, or modified.'[1]

All these details refer to the provincial representations of Mystery Plays, for in Paris, from the outset of the fifteenth century, the Spoken Mystery was usually acted in a permanent theatre. Towards 1398 a society, formed of citizens, master-masons, lockmakers, and others, united in Paris to give various pious plays drawn from the New Testament, for the benefit of the public. After their expulsion from the village of Saint-Maur, where they had set up a provisional theatre, they obtained letters patent from Charles VII. in 1402, which conferred on them all the privileges of a corporation. Thus organised as the *Confrérie de la Passion*, they hired the Hall of the Hôpital de la Trinité in Paris, and converted it into a permanent theatre, where they gave themselves up entirely to the performance of Passion Plays on Sundays and holidays. It should be remembered that although the Passion Drama had been given in the fourteenth century, it was acted as a *mimed* mystery. There was, indeed, another *spoken* 'Mystery of the Passion' at the close of the fourteenth century, but written in the *langue d'oc*. This Confraternity accordingly inaugurated the famous Passion Plays

[1] Bapst, *Essai sur l'Histoire du Théâtre*.

in Paris, comprising as many as thirty to forty thousand lines.

The Salle de la Trinité was 40 metres long by 12 wide. The stage was at one end. The *parterre* was separated from it by a barrier and benches, behind which stood the spectators, irrespective of rank or condition. The stage had three platforms: the highest represented Paradise, the middle one Earth, the third Hell and the dragon's mouth. The stages communicated by revolving stairs or ladders. The actors (as in the provinces) seated themselves, when not playing, upon the benches at either side of the stage, in full view of the audience. In Paris, as we have said, the longest mysteries did not exceed forty thousand lines; hence the performances were much shorter than in the provinces, where the religious plays contained seventy or eighty thousand lines. Before commencing the play, a procession was formed through the most frequented streets of the capital, and the costumes of those who took part were no less costly than in the provinces.

Along with the Brothers of the Passion, we must mention another famous confraternity, which came into existence first, and maintained its privileges: this was the Guild of S. Crispin, consisting of shoemakers. It was the custom for the members of this society to walk in procession to Notre-Dame on the 25th of October in each year, preceded by the *bâton* of the saint and the arms of the corporation, and there to perform the Mystery of their patron.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

III

MIRACLE PLAYS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY AND THEIR PERFORMANCE

The Woodkirk (or Towneley) Plays—The Coventry Plays; importance of the allegorical element in these mysteries—Features of the different cycles of Miracle Plays—Character of performances at York, Woodkirk, Chester, and Coventry—The pageants: *mise-en-scène*, locality, costumes—Religious Drama in London.

NEXT to the cycle of York Plays in chronological order comes the Woodkirk, or Towneley, collection, which in its complete form dates from the reign of Henry VI., doubtless from the year 1450. These miracle plays were named after a little hamlet, where the performances usually took place, near Wakefield, in the county of York.

The Towneley Plays are thirty-two in number, in the following order:—1. The Creation and the Rebellion of Lucifer; 2. Mactatio Abel; 3. Processus Noae cum Filiis; 4. Abraham; 5. Jacob and Esau; 6. Processus Prophetarum; 7. David; 8. Sibilla propheta; 9. Pharaoh; 10. Caesar Augustus; 11. Annunciatio; 12. Salutatio Elizabethae; 13. Pastorum; 14. Alter eorundem; 15. Oblatio Magorum; 16. Fugatio Josephi et Mariae in

Egiptum; 17. Magnus Herodes; 18. Purificatio Mariae; 19. Johannes Baptista; 20. Conspiratio Christi; 21. Colaphizatio; 22. Flagellatio; 23. Processus Crucis; 24. Processus Talentorum; 25. Extractio Animarum; 26. Resurrectio Domini; 27. Peregrini; 28. Thomas Indiae; 29. Ascensio Domini; 30. Judicium; 31. Lazarus; 32. Suspensio Judae. (These last two are later additions—the series of course ending originally with the *Judicium*, or Doomsday.)

There is reason to suppose that the earliest plays of this collection were composed about 1360, and are consequently contemporaneous with the York cycle, which they closely resemble. The Woodkirk, or Towneley, Plays are believed to be the work of the Augustinian friars, who had houses in this district up to the time of the Reformation. They were written in the vernacular, and contain endless dialect-words and forms, which make them difficult reading. The secular character of this series is much more pronounced than in the other cycles of miracle plays, and their object seems to be less that of serving the cause of religion than of amusing the people, for there is a distinct note of buffoonery in their interpolations on the Scripture narrative. It is supposed that these miracles were played on fair-days by the different trade-guilds.

A fourth and famous collection is that of the Coventry Plays, later by some years than the Woodkirk cycle. It dates from the reign of Henry VII., and was only completed at that period. But

undoubtedly some of the plays in this series were represented as early as 1416. The entire collection consisted of forty-two plays, of which all the manuscripts save one have been preserved. These are:—1. The Creation; 2. The Fall of Man; 3. Cain and Abel; 4. Noah's Flood; 5. Abraham's Sacrifice; 6. Moses, and the Two Tables; 7. The Prophets; 8. The Barrenness of Anna; 9. Mary in the Temple; 10. Mary's Betrothment; 11. The Salutation and Conception; 12. Joseph's Return; 13. The Visit to Elizabeth; 14. The Trial of Joseph and Mary; 15. The Birth of Christ; 16. Adoration of the Shepherds; 17. Adoration of the Magi; 18. The Purification; 19. Slaughter of the Innocents; 20. Christ disputing in the Temple; 21. The Baptism of Christ; 22. The Temptation; 23. The Woman taken in Adultery; 24. Lazarus; 25. Council of the Jews; 26. The Entry into Jerusalem; 27. The Last Supper; 28. Mary Magdalen; 29. The Betrayal of Christ; 30. King Herod; 31. The Trial of Christ; 32. The Condemnation and Crucifixion; 33. The Descent into Hell; 34. The Burial of Christ; 35. The Resurrection; 36. The Three Maries; 37. Christ appearing to Mary; 38. The Pilgrim of Emmaus; 39. The Ascension; 40. Descent of the Holy Ghost; 41. The Assumption of the Virgin; 42. Doomsday.

There is every reason to suppose that the Coventry Plays were the work of clerical hands, for their religious character is distinctly more pronounced than that of the other cycles, and as literary efforts they are far superior. These plays were acted

only on Sunday, and more than a year would frequently elapse between the first and the last performance of the cycle, for they were not given every week. A feature unknown elsewhere was the proclamation of the Coventry Plays some days beforehand by *vexillatores* (banner-bearers). And the expository prologue, spoken by the principal characters of each play in the other cycles, is here replaced by an allegorical personage or *Prologus*, called *Contemplacio*. Moreover, in the Angelic Salutation, there is not only a prologue, but also the abstract characters of the virtues, *Justicia*, *Misericordia*, *Veritas*, and *Pax*. Hence we find in these an element of the moralities, to be treated below.

The performance of the Coventry Plays was by no means limited to the town of Coventry. At occasional intervals the mystery players of that city made theatrical progresses to various other places. In 1570 it is recorded that they gave a performance at Bristol, and it is not improbable that they stopped on their way at Stratford-on-Avon, and gave a performance at which (according to Halliwell-Phillipps)[1] Shakespeare may have been present. There is no record of similar progresses having been undertaken by the actors from Chester, York, and Woodkirk. The plays in all these collections have been corrected and added to, either to adapt them to the manners of the period or to prepare the ground for some special religious discussion.

[1] *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, p. 42.

The Miracle Plays of Chester and Towneley are full of alterations, and contain different specimens of orthography from 1350 to 1600. The Towneley series was less altered, the only perceptible modification being the suppression of passages relating to the Seven Sacraments and to Transubstantiation, both cardinal points in Catholic dogma.

The representations at York and Woodkirk took place without much stage furniture, for they were organised and acted by poor people. The expenses were covered by a yearly rate, varying from a penny to fourpence, levied on every craftsman. At Chester and Coventry it was otherwise. In these two places the town undertook the expenses, and it is reckoned that each play must have cost about £15 sterling—an enormous sum for that period. The payments to the Coventry players began at fourteenpence, and reached in some cases as much as four shillings—no inconsiderable sum in those days. The Chester and Coventry Plays were renowned throughout England for their magnificence. Crowds of players flocked to see them, and they became the occasion of so much expenditure and even debauch, that the preachers finally declaimed against them from the pulpit.

As we said on p. 122, the theatre of the English miracle plays was called a 'pageant.' 'It was a movable, wooden, rectangular structure of two rooms, one over the other, the lower closed, the upper one—that in which the performances took place—being open, at least on one side, to the audience. The vehicle itself, every portion of

which was visible to the audience, was grotesquely painted, and was furnished in the upper room with tapestries that answered the purposes of scenery, and with mechanical appliances for the disposition of the various objects introduced, such as hell-mouth, a favourite property of the ancient English stage. This consisted of a huge face constructed of painted canvas, exhibiting glaring eyes and a red nose of enormous dimensions; the whole so contrived with movable jaws of large projecting teeth, that when the mouth opened, flames could be seen within the hideous aperture; the fire being probably represented by the skilful management of links or torches held behind the painted canvas. There was frequently at the back of the stage a raised platform, to which there was an ascent by steps from the floor of the pageant, and sometimes an important part of the action of the mystery was enacted on it. Some of the properties, however rude, must have been of large dimensions. They were generally made of wood, which was invariably painted, but some appear to have been constructed of basket-work covered over with painted cloths. The larger ones were cities with pinnacles and towers, kings' palaces, temples, castles, and suchlike, some probably not very unlike decorated sentry-boxes. Clouds were represented by painted cloths so contrived that they could open and show angels in the heavens. Artificial trees were introduced, with beds, tombs, pulpits, ships, ladders, and numerous other articles. The idea of an earthquake seems to have been attempted by means of some mechanism

within a barrel. In the lower room, connected with pulleys in the upper part of the pageant, was a windlass, used for the purpose of raising or lowering the larger properties, and for various objects for which movable ropes could be employed' (*infra*).

The general character of the staging appears to have undergone no important modifications between the fifteenth and end of the sixteenth centuries.

As in the York and Chester Plays, the number of pageants was equal to the number of companies engaged in representing the play. These defiled in order, halting each at the same point to perform the part of the mystery assigned to them, until all the scenes had been represented in each quarter, thus enabling 'all behoulders to heare and see them.'[1]

'The costumes of many of the personages in the mysteries were of a grotesque and fanciful description, but in some cases, as in those of Adam and Eve, there was an attempt to make the dresses harmonise with the circumstances of the history. Some writers, interpreting the stage directions too literally, have asserted that those characters were introduced upon the pageant in a state of nudity. This was certainly not the case. When they were presumed to be destitute of clothing, they appeared in dresses made either of white leather or of flesh-coloured clothes, over which at the proper time were thrown the garments of skins. Many of the other costumes were extravagantly whimsical. Thus Herod was always introduced wearing red

[1] Archdeacon Rogers, *supra*.

gloves, while his clothes and head-gear seem to have been painted or dyed in a variety of colours. Pontius Pilate was usually enwrapped in a large green cloak, which opened in front to enable him to wield an immense club. The Devil was also grotesquely arrayed, and had a mask or false head which frequently required either mending or painting.'[1]

The gorgeous spectacles at Skinners' Well were more than ever popular in the fifteenth century. Of 1409 Stow writes, 'This yeare was a great play at the Skinners' Well, neare unto Clerkenwell, besides London, which lasted eight daies, and was of matter from the creation of the world: there were to see the same the most part of the nobles and gentles in England.'[2] Warton states that in the reign of Henry VII., mysteries and religious plays were performed in Westminster Palace in the King's presence.

[1] Halliwell-Phillipps, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 *et seq.*
[2] Collier, *op. cit.* i. 28.

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

IV

COMEDY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The *Clercs de la Basoche* and the Hall of the Palais de Justice—Religious Moralities—Political Comedy, or the Annals of France—The *Enfants Sans-Souci*—The Farce and the 'Sotie'—Principal political plays of the reign of Charles VII., Louis XI., and Charles VIII.—Satirical Farce; various examples—*La vraie farce de Maître Pathelin*; its dramatic importance—Satires on the different trades: *Le Franc-Archer de Bagnolet*—Satires on women and marriage: *La Cornette*, *Le vieil Amoureux et le jeune Amoureux*—The Monologue.

Comedy, which was almost entirely neglected during the fourteenth century, made a new start alongside of the Mystery Play. The development of this type, that was barely sketched out in the thirteenth century, corresponded to a spiritual need. As has been justly remarked by M. Petit de Julleville: 'Humanity was no longer contented with tradition. From henceforward it would use the forces of its intelligence to observe, to analyse, and to conclude.' For the rest, this revolution in the intellectual order originated with the literary class. The numerous clerks in the service of the Government and of the Parliament formed, like the trade-guilds, corporations, the most powerful of which was the *Clercs de la Basoche*, which included all the lawyers

throughout the extent of French territory. This corporation had its own privileges, a special jurisdiction, and a king who wore a cap similar to that worn by the King of France. Of all these advantages, the one most valued was that of giving theatrical representations in the great Hall of the Palais de Justice. Encouraged by the success of the *Confrérie de la Passion*, the Clerks of the Basoche began to compose plays, of which they were themselves the interpreters. But instead of deriving inspiration from the scenes of the Scriptures, they were the creators of a new type, the Morality, or allegorical play, which is only one of the forms of Comedy in the Middle Ages.

The earliest Moralities, which date from the second part of the fifteenth century, inculcated a hatred of vice and a love of virtue. For the most part they opposed the life of the reprobate to that of the virtuous man, setting forth the punishments that attended the wicked in another world, and even in this life, and the rewards reserved for the godly. At other times they attacked a particular vice : gluttony, jealousy, or blasphemy. In the class of Moralities that established a contrast between the conduct of the good and the bad man, the first place must be assigned to the piece entitled *Bien-Avisé et Mal-Avisé*. The first personifies the virtuous man : the second, the perverted sinner ; the other allegorical personages are Contrition, Confession, Humility, Penitence, Alms, Fasting, Despair, Larceny, Diligence, Patience, Prudence, Honour,

Fortune (this last represented by a wheel), and Satan. In this morality, after exciting the terror of the spectators by setting forth the suffering that awaits the evil-doer in Hell, the author ends the piece with a comforting picture—the apotheosis of the virtuous man carried up to Heaven by the angels.

Akin to the Religious Moralities are those designed to give advice to parents on the education of their children. The most important of the moralities of this particular type is that of the *Enfants de Maintenant*, in which the allegorical personages are Instruction and Discipline. In the same order of ideas we may cite the morality of *L'Enfant Ingrat*, an attack on parents who wish, from pride, to educate their children above their social station. A religious morality of a very special type (since it has the turn of the true comedy) is that of *L'Aveugle et le Boiteux*, composed by André de la Vigne, and played for the first time at Seurre, in 1496, after the performance of the mystery of *Saint Martin* by the same author.

Most of the religious Moralities aim at inculcating virtue in the name of the Christian faith, but others pursue the same end from a purely lay standpoint. Among these is the play called *La Condamnation des Banquets*. This is a kind of treatise on sobriety, written by a professor of law, named Nicolas de la Chesnaye, in the hope of curing his fellow-citizens of the vice of gluttony, which seems to have been over-common at this epoch. In this piece the principal parts are those of

Dinner, Supper, and Banquet, the secondary characters being Apoplexy, Paralysis, Epilepsy, Gout, etc., who dog the guests at the close of the repast. Other characters are Health, Sobriety, and Pill, who are the medicaments, and obtain sentence on the two chief offenders, Supper and Banquet.

A second form of Comedy in the fifteenth century is the Moral Farce—otherwise the Political Comedy (or 'The Annals of the History of France') which was in vogue from 1440 to the end of the sixteenth century, its writers and interpreters being not only the Clercs de la Basoche, but also the members of another society called *Les Enfants Sans-Souci.* Throughout this period the theatre was a regular tribune, the voice by which the people expressed their grievances or showed their approbation. On the one hand, in effect, it made a violent attack (under the cloak of jesting) on contemporary institutions, where they were absurd or arbitrary; on the other, it awarded praise to the ruling powers when they deserved well of the nation. From this twofold point of view, these comedies are a true abstract of the History of France—its internal, and sometimes its external politics.

Mention has just been made of the Enfants Sans-Souci. This company was largely composed of the sons of good *bourgeois* families who were well educated for that period. As early as the commencement of the fifteenth century, they had obtained from the Confrérie de la Passion (who had the monopoly of theatrical representations in

Paris) the right, not only of playing their pieces in the capital, but of using the great Hall of the Hôpital de la Trinité, with certain stipulations: *e.g.* the division of profits between the two companies; obligatory residence for part of the year of the Enfants Sans-Souci in Paris; organisation of the company into a regular confraternity, with a leader named the Prince of Fools, and other dignitaries; the adoption of a special costume with a cap adorned with asses' ears.

It is not always easy to distinguish the pieces of the Enfants Sans-Souci from those of the Basochians, more especially as the plays of one and the other company are termed indiscriminately farces. Generally speaking, however, we may regard the 'Sotie' as an intermediate type between the Farce and the Morality, a type dominated by satire. It is for the most part a kind of Comedy of Manners, recalling those of Aristophanes—sometimes attacking society as a whole, sometimes confining itself to the ridiculing of a trade or social type.

The Enfants Sans-Souci acted their plays on trestles set up in the market-place, and on great occasions in front of the Halle aux Poissons. And, as we have seen, they also acted farces in the great Salle de l'Hôpital, from time to time placed at their disposal by the Brothers of the Passion, who in return for this service obtained permission to act the Soties, plays of which the exclusive rights belonged to their lessees.

Moral Farces of a historical or political character date from the reign of Charles VII. The first was

composed under the following circumstances. The victory of Patay, gained by Jeanne d'Arc over the English, after the deliverance of Orleans, freed a part of France from the foreign yoke, and enabled Charles VII. to re-enter Paris, August 12, 1429. The king now thought only of reorganising his kingdom, and healing the scars of war, when the country was again disturbed by a revolt of the nobles against the reforms in the army—an outbreak known as the *Praguerie.* The people, reduced to misery by the English war, viewed the prospect of a civil strife with horror. Under these conditions the Farce was chosen to interpret the complaints and grievances of the *petite bourgeoisie* as well as of the people. On this occasion the Clercs de la Basoche composed and played *La Farce morale à cinq personnages allégoriques: Métier, Marchandise, Berger, Temps, les Gens,* in which the characters all engage in discussions on the state of affairs. The establishment of a permanent army in France dates also from the reign of Charles VII. The first soldiers were mere robbers, who devastated the country, and plundered the poor. Hence the composition of the morality of the *Peuple pensif et Plat-Pays,* which denounced the excesses of these soldiers. From the reign of Charles VII., again, dates the imposition of the tax of 'perpetual fief,' designed to cover the charges of the military service, the entire burden of which fell upon the people. On the other hand, the excessive expenses incurred by the king in the gratification of his pleasures was another heavy burden

on the poorer classes. A lament over all these abuses was sent up in a morality entitled the *Farce Nouvelle.*

When Louis XI. ascended the throne, he promised his subjects a sensible amelioration in the state of affairs. The people looked for great things from his promises, and were sadly disillusioned in the event. They retaliated by the moral farce *Les Gens nouveaux* (New-comers, who 'devour the world, and send it from bad to worse'). This farce rallied the reformers, whose pretension is to do better than their neighbours.

This is the only farce left from the reign of Louis XI. The king was hostile to the liberty of the theatre, and political comedy was more or less dumb under his administration.

When his son Charles VIII. succeeded to the throne, the Basochians hoped to indemnify themselves, but their boldness displeased the king, who forbade the performance of several of their farces.

Among the more essentially satirical of the Farces, one of the most famous is the *Monde, Abus, les Sots,* attributed by some to Gringoire. The author mocks at the whole of human society, under pretext that the world is made up of fools and blockheads. The principal characters of the piece are *Sot-Dissolu,* who represents the clergy; *Sot-Ignorant,* who personifies ignorance; *Sot-Corrompu,* who symbolises the magistrates, and *Sotte-Folle,* who stands for the feminine gender. These different folks decide to destroy the world, and build a

new one. Their attempts, however, result in wild confusion, and they are obliged to fall back on the old world.

After inveighing against the whole nation, Satirical Farce attacked the individual institutions. Thus, in the farce *Les Bâtards de Caux ou Cadets sans Biens*, primogeniture is sharply criticised. Yet the Farce rarely makes a direct attack on established institutions. For the most part it criticises abuses, without touching on principles, as is its procedure in regard to the clergy, who are the constant subject of its bitterest railleries. The *Farce du Meunier*, in which a priest plays an abominable *rôle*, was performed on the 9th October 1496, before the clergy, who uttered no protest. All the Church demanded was that its dogma should be respected, and, from these different points of view, the Comedy of the Middle Ages is related to Greek Comedy and Tragedy. The Farce directed its most malicious criticisms against the privileged orders, as the clergy, nobility, and the magistrates, but neither did it spare the representatives of the more modest classes, the merchants and artisans. In the farce *Folle Bombance*, for instance, the satire is violently directed against the *petits bourgeois* who attempt to copy the gentlefolks in their fashions and manners.

Among social types, the one most closely studied and most successfully ridiculed in the Farces is the honeyed and unprincipled advocate. He goes by the name of Pathelin, and this word has been

adopted in the French language to characterise the crafty individual who by his amiability and sweetness endeavours to influence those whom he is hoping to deceive. *La Farce de Maître Pathelin* (presumably composed about 1470), is the one piece of the Middle Ages of any real literary value, and is, in fine, the first regular comedy that appeared in France. It is of appreciable value from the literary point of view, since it has enriched the French language with a host of proverbs and phrases. It possesses the qualities requisite for a good comedy: it is of sufficient length, the characters are well-drawn, the comedy goes deep, while the style for that period is excellent. It is to be regretted that the author of this little *chef-d'œuvre* is unknown, for at the outset it was erroneously attributed to Villon, to Pierre Blanchet, or to Antoine de la Salle. It is now admitted that the author of *Pathelin* left no trace of his name. There is reason for supposing that this mysterious individual was not a writer by profession, but a mere private individual; as it were, the genius of a day, who in an inspired moment threw all the strength of his nature into this composition. Even in the Middle Ages, this production was regarded as so superior that a considerable number of editions were brought out, twenty-five of which, prior to the seventeenth century, have come down to us. At the commencement of the eighteenth century, Abbé Brueys produced from the original work a prose comedy in three acts, into which he introduced the amorous passion;

calling it *L'Avocat Pathelin.* This play, which followed the original fairly closely, was retained in the repertory till the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1872, however, M. Édouard Fournier made a rhymed translation from the original text; and this was successfully played at the Comédie-Française, where it has ever since occupied an important place in the repertory of this famous national theatre. To give a rapid summary: A briefless advocate discusses with his wife, Guillemette, their precarious situation, and devises measures for remedying the state of affairs. While Dame Guillemette is complaining more particularly of the poverty of her garments, Pathelin has a sudden happy inspiration. He resorts to his neighbour Guillaume, the draper, and by cajolery wheedles out of him, at a far lower price than that asked by the dealer, a piece of cloth, which he takes on credit, with the distinct intention of never paying for it. He carries off the packet under his arm, with an invitation to Guillaume to fetch his money himself later on. Dame Guillemette happens to be cooking a goose, and the draper shall share the feast. The merchant is delighted: even in reducing the price of his cloth to please his client, he has sold him, at twenty-four *sous* the ell, a cloth not worth twenty; and now he will have a good dinner into the bargain! At the appointed time, Guillaume betakes himself to Pathelin, who, feigning to be very ill, has gone to bed. He babbles, and talks nonsense, in a mixture of patois—Limousin, Picard, Norman, and Latin,—

until Guillaume, terrified at this incomprehensible gibberish, and believing his client to be mad, departs incontinently, leaving Pathelin master of the situation. But his triumph is not of long duration. The cloth-merchant has a shepherd called Agnelet, whom he hales before the judge on the charge of having made away with his sheep, whereupon Agnelet appeals to Pathelin to take his defence against his master. What is the stupefaction of Guillaume to recognise in his shepherd's advocate the man who stole his cloth! He loses his head, mixes up the two affairs, and although the judge reminds him that he is there for his sheep, and not for his cloth, the wretched Guillaume persists in reclaiming the price of his six ells of cloth. Agnelet, for his part, at the advice of his counsel, acts the innocent before the judge, and answers '*baa*' to every question put to him. The judge gets impatient, and supposing he has to do with an idiot, acquits the accused and dismisses the court. The advocate then claims his fee from Agnelet, but the shepherd, remembering his instructions as counsel, answers him too by *baa*-ing. The moral of the whole story is that Pathelin is the victim of his own tricks, and that among the three rogues it is the most simple who has outwitted the other two.

Another object of the Satirical Farce was to ridicule the braggadocio, and one of the best satires of the type is that of the *Franc-Archer de Bagnolet*, written in the fifteenth century at about the same date as *La Farce de Maître Pathelin*.

This satire ridicules the sharpshooters, soldiers levied by Louis XI., who were highly unpopular on account of their brutality to the country-folk, and from their proverbial cowardice. Adventurers and knaves are also hardly used in the satires. The petty trades again are passed in review. Sometimes it is the water-carrier, who asks the hand of a beautiful maiden, and runs off on the eve of the marriage with all the presents; sometimes the colporteur, who sells indifferently obscene books, or pious manuals. Or it is the domestic servants, who are represented to us in mediaeval comedy as gluttons, thieves, and traitors. Above all, it is the nurses who displease the authors of these farces.

The Satirical Farce of the Middle Ages is hostile to marriage, and girds with especial rancour against women. There are quite a number of pieces which describe their whims. We have crabbed wives and scolding wives, young women who are vain and giddy, stingy, jealous, or untruthful, spendthrift to the point of ruining their husbands by their luxurious toilettes.

And yet among these farces some are very witty, and the authors give to the women they are criticising a certain charm and humour which makes us overlook their perfidy. Among these is a little comedy of refined observation composed by Jean d'Abondance, entitled *La Cornette.*

Another exception is the farce of *Le vieil Amoureux et le jeune Amoureux*, which celebrates maternal devotion in these charming lines:—

'Or ça, qui nous a élevés,
Nourris petits, alimentés,
Vestis, et lavés, et frottés,
Tenus nets, et de corps et d'âmes?
Respons.—Et ç'ont esté les femmes.'

The pretty farce *Deux Amoureux récréatifs et joyeux* by the famous poet Clément Marot, with another composition of the same kind by Marguerite d'Angoulême, Queen of Navarre, make a charming close to this miniature series of comedies in favour of the feminine sex.

Satirical Farce is particularly severe on the wives who want to dominate their husbands, or even are not absolutely submissive to them. In this connection we have the *Cuvier* (wash-tub), next to *Pathelin* the most remarkable farce of the Middle Ages. It was played at the Odéon, in 1898, at a classical matinée.

Generally speaking, one may say that the authors of the farces delight in making woman responsible for all the griefs, worries, and quarrels of the *ménage.*

In the Middle Ages the name of comedy was also given to a special type—the Monologue, a sort of burlesque recitation to which the author resorted to make an *exposé* of all his caprices, and to excite the laughter of the spectators. The Monologue did not survive the sixteenth century.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

IV

RELIGIOUS DRAMA IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Miracle Plays in the Nicholls collection, and in the Bodleian Library—The complete collection of the Chester Plays — Miracle Plays in the provinces—Latest representations of Miracle Plays—Tragedy of the *Destruction of Jerusalem* — Earliest printed religious plays — Performances in London: the Parish-Clerks at the Guildhall — The *Mystery of the Passion* at Greyfriars — First allegorical plays — Practical utility of the Miracle Plays in the Middle Ages — Last Miracle Play performed in England—Influence of the Mysteries upon the destinies of the English Theatre—Historic, comic, grotesque, and satiric elements of the Romantic Drama latent in the Miracle Plays; various examples—The Twelfth Woodkirk Play and the first specimen of Comedy.

In addition to the four cycles of Miracle Plays described in the previous chapters, there exists a fifth collection in manuscript, belonging to Mr. Nicholls. The plays in this collection differ very little from the Chester Plays, but they contain more allusions to the manners of the period.

Lastly, the Bodleian Library at Oxford contains a third collection of Mysteries, the manuscript of which dates back to the beginning of the sixteenth century. These mysteries treat of the Conversion of S. Paul, the life of Mary Magdalene, and the Massacre of the Innocents.

It was, moreover, at the end of the sixteenth

century, or quite at the beginning of the seventeenth, that the Chester Plays, which we have already considered, were described in the form in which they have come down to us, comprising the twenty-four divisions that follow :—1. The Fall of Lucifer; 2. De Creatione Mundi; 3. De Diluvio Noae; 4. De Abrahamo, Melchisedech, et Loth; 5. De Mose et Rege Balaak et Balaam Prophetâ; 6. De Salutatione et Nativitate Salvatoris; 7. De Pastoribus greges pascentibus; 8. De Tribus Regibus Orientalibus; 9. De Oblatione Tertium Regum; 10. De occisione Innocentium; 11. De Purificatione Virginis; 12. De Tentatione Salvatoris; 13. De Chelidomo et de Resurrectione Lazari; 14. De Jesu intrante domum Simeonis Leprosi; 15. De Coenâ Domini; 16. De Passione Christi; 17. De Descensu Christi ad Infernos; 18. De Resurrectione Jesu-Christi; 19. De Christo ad Castellam Emaüs; 20. De Ascensione Domini; 21. De Electione Mathiae; 22. Ezechiel; 23. De Adventu Antichristi; 24. De Judicio extremo.

Little is known as to the representations of Miracle Plays in the other towns of England. Very probably every district had its own performance. It is at any rate certain, according to Collier's account, that religious drama was very popular, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, at Preston, Lancaster, Kendal, Dublin, Tewkesbury, Reading, and Newcastle.

The most famous performances were those at Smithfield (1407), where the actors played one Mystery for eight consecutive days; at Windsor

(in 1416), where the Mystery of a *Play of St. George of Cappadocia* was acted before Henry v. and the Emperor Sigismund; at Bristol (in the commencement of the sixteenth century), where *Noah's Ark* was performed with success.

The latest representations of the great cycles of Miracle Plays took place at York in 1579, at Woodkirk about the same time, and at Chester in 1600. The Coventry Plays had been suppressed in 1580, and replaced by what appeared to be quite a different type, but was in reality only a miracle play disguised. This was the tragedy, *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, relating the events of the life of Joseph, and designed to revive all the attractions of the previous mysteries, under a form calculated to still the scruples of the authorities. This 'miracle play' composed by John Smith, of St. John's College, Oxford, contained a chorus, and the staging was particularly effective. It was played for the last time, in 1591, at Coventry; and was the latest representation of a pageant in that town. In other English towns, however, as at Preston, Lancaster, and Kendal, religious plays of the type of the *Destruction of Jerusalem* were acted at the beginning of James the First's reign. Prynne, the Puritan pamphleteer, moreover informs us that the Catholics performed a *Passion Play* in certain districts of England at the same period.

In the category of 'disguised mysteries,' we must include certain printed religious plays, which go by the name of tragedies or comedies, but are really sacred dramas. These are *The Three Lands*

of Nature, God's Promises, John the Baptist preaching in the Wilderness. These are the earliest printed plays; they date from the reign of Elizabeth, and are remarkable as containing the first unmistakable references of a controversial character in favour of the Reformation.

It is not possible to trace the exact career of the religious drama in London; but, according to the historian Strype, the Guild of the Parish Clerks gave in 1551, at the Guildhall, a performance of a religious character, followed by a magnificent procession in the streets of the city. Warton further tells us that in 1556 and 1577, the *Mystery of the Passion* was represented at the Greyfriars before the Lord Mayor and several corporations of the kingdom.

It was at much the same period that a new series of plays appeared in England, and set forth the allegorical personages of the Moral—Infidelity, Pride, Concupiscence. The most famous Moral Plays are: *The Trial of Pleasure* (printed in 1567); *All for Money* (1578); *The Three Ladies of London* (1584); *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1590); in all which the development of the characters betrays the influence of the comedies and tragedies written at this epoch on classical and Italian models.

Until the end of the reign of Elizabeth, Miracle Plays were represented along with the Moralities and Classical Plays, and even with the Romantic Drama. This extraordinary vitality of the religious drama arises from the fact that the direct aim of the miracle play was the diffusion of religious know-

ledge. The comic element, and the element of buffoonery came in time to occupy an important place, but the Miracle Play remained none the less the channel by which the ignorant were taught the truths of religion. So true is this, that in the middle of the seventeenth century there were still, according to Halliwell Phillipps, Catholics whose religious instruction was limited to a knowledge of the facts of Scripture as presented in the miracle plays. From 1580 onwards, the doctrines of the Reformation rendered such performances increasingly difficult, but they continued to exert a salutary influence in certain Catholic districts. According to William Prynne, the latest performance of a mystery took place in London on the evening of Good Friday, at Ely House, in Holborn, during the latter half of the reign of James I., before Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador, and thousands of spectators.

Nor was the propagation of the truths of the Catholic Church the sole function of the Miracle Plays; they were further invaluable inasmuch as they developed a love of the drama in almost every county of England, and thus in some sort prepared the way for the establishment of the National Theatre. Neither indeed was their influence limited to this preliminary and remote action: it was more direct, seeing that the Miracle Play, from the fourteenth century, contained the capital elements of the Shakespearean Drama—historical, comic, grotesque, dramatic—as well as that element of satire which is so largely utilised in the Eliza-

bethan Plays. In short, it is an interesting point that the English Drama did not wait on the masterpieces of Marlowe and Shakespeare to translate its temperament, and convert the Theatre into a mirror of life. Already from the fourteenth century, the Miracle Play, in setting side by side the terrible and the grotesque, the tragic and the comic, had antedated the Romantic Drama by several generations.

We pointed out above that the York Play on *The Creation and Fall of Lucifer*, which contains the development of an important historical situation, may be regarded as the earliest indication of this note upon the stage. The dramatic spirit is very pronounced in the Chester Play *De Abrahamo*, which relates the sacrifice of Isaac—one of the most pathetic incidents conceivable, and by its clever development constituting a true tragedy. The Lament of Mary at the foot of the Cross afforded another highly dramatic incident.

The eighth and ninth Chester Plays, the fifteenth Woodkirk Play, the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first Coventry Plays, contain all the several elements of melodrama: Herod abandons himself to fits of terrible fury; he brandishes a huge sword, flourishes it up and down, and finally breaks it in the extremity of his passion. Death in the shape of a spectre glides across the scene, and smites the king during a banquet.

The true comic element appears in the Miracles as early as the thirteenth century, for the third Chester Play, *Noah's Flood*, which we take as an

instance, is certainly prior to the fourteenth century. The dispute between Noah and his wife, who refuses to enter the Ark if she may not take in her friends, is full of humour. She says :—

> 'But I have my gossippes every eichone,
> One foote further I will not gone,
> The(y) shall not drowne, by Saint John,
> And I maye save there life.
>
> 'The(y) loven me full well, by Christe!
> But thou lett them into thy cheiste ;
> Elles rowe nowe wher' thy leiste
> And gette the a newe wiffe.'

To which Noah responds :—

> 'Come in, wife, in twenty devills' way,
> Or else stande there all day.'

When at last forced in, she strikes him, exclaiming :—

> 'Have thou that for thy note.'

This farcical element is brought to perfection in the twelfth Woodkirk Play, which dates from the middle of the fifteenth century, and includes, as a 'diversion,' the following curious episode. The three shepherds, after conversing on their shrewish wives and other familiar topics, are about to sing, when they are interrupted by the arrival of an acquaintance, named Mak, who, it seems, does not bear the best reputation for honesty. After supper they all lie down to sleep, but the shepherds take care that Mak shall lie between them, that he may not get up unobserved, and steal their sheep. While they are snoring, he, nevertheless, contrives to escape, and makes off with a fat wether, which he

carries home to his wife, as he had done often before. She is afraid of his being at last detected and hanged, and Mak is himself in considerable alarm lest the shepherds should wake, and finding both him and the sheep missing, conclude that he had stolen it, and pay him a visit. The wife proposes this scheme:—that if the shepherds came, Mak should pretend that she had just been brought to bed, and that the sheep, which was to be covered up in the cradle, was the child she had produced. Mak agrees to the plan, but to avoid suspicion returns, and lies down again with the shepherds, without his absence having been noticed. When the shepherds wake, they walk to the fold, and Mak hastens home, where he takes care that his wife and the dead sheep are put to bed and cradled in due form. The shepherds soon miss their wether, and suspect Mak: they go to his cottage, and making a noise to be admitted, Mak entreats them not to disturb his poor wife, telling them that she has a baby. She, too, joins in the entreaty, as the least sound goes through her head, and the shepherds are for a time imposed upon. They are on the point of departing, but return and ask to see the child, and one of them offers to give it sixpence. Mak replies that it is sleeping, and that it cries sadly when it is waked; but he cannot keep them from lifting up the coverlet of the cradle. There they see their sheep, and recognise it by the ear-mark, although the wife would fain persuade them that it is her child, which had been transformed by an evil spirit.

Such was the famous humorous tale of Mak and the shepherds—a real gem, in which are already united all the elements of true comedy, and which in the fifteenth century inaugurated a type that was but continued by Udal and Shakespeare. In this respect the Miracle Play needed only the division into acts to have robbed Udal of the glory of having, nearly a century later, created the first English comedy proper.

The satiric note is struck with peculiar emphasis in several of the Miracles of these different collections.

Thus in the twenty-sixth Coventry Play we find Satan declaring himself Lord Lucifer, Prince of this World, and Grand Duke of Hell. Then he describes the air and manners befitting a gentleman. He tells us that a gallant ought to be a corrupter of morals and consciences, and to have the fighting temperament. He ought to mock at civil and religious laws, and to obey no precept nor commandment. Satan, moreover, proclaims that a woman who is *à la mode* should be clad in ermine, and, if poor, should have no scruples in obtaining money by the most dishonest means. This play was doubtless composed in the reign of Henry VI., and its sarcasms relate to the corrupt manners of society at that period.

Other mysteries read like a rough sketch for the Comedy of Manners, and give us curious details of certain ancient customs.

The seventh Chester Play, for instance (which must date back to the beginning of the fourteenth

century), implies that the 'jannocks of Lancashire, butter of Blacon, cheese, and Halton ale' were specially appreciated.

The seventeenth Chester Play contains a passage by which we may conclude that there was formerly much to complain of in the proprietors of the taverns and bars of Chester. A woman who had been a 'taverner and tapster' in Chester addresses 'Sir Sathanas, sergeant of hell,' after his dominions had been emptied: having related how she had cheated her customers, with bad wine and small measures, she declares that she will remain and keep the devil company.

And again, in the twenty-eighth Woodkirk Play, we hear of the way in which the women arranged their hair, that it was 'horned like a cowe.'

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

V

HISTORICAL COMEDY, DOGMATIC MORALITIES, DRAMATIC MORALITIES, AND THE LAST MYSTERIES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Political Comedy under Louis XII. : *Le Jeu du Prince des Sots*—Political Comedy under Francis I. : *La Farce des Théologastres*, and the Reformation in Germany—Comedy in the provinces—The Theatre and the struggles of the Reformation in France: *La Maladie de Chrétienté*—*La Comédie facétieuse de Frère Fécisti*, and the end of the political theatre—The Dramatic Morality the precursor of the Social Drama: *Un Empereur qui tua son neveu*—The Mimed Mystery in Paris and the provinces—The Spoken Mysteries, and the Brothers of the Passion: *Les Actes des Apôtres* and *Le Vieux Testament* at the Hôtel de Flandres—Disputes between the Brothers and the Parliament—Last representations of the Mysteries at the Hôtel de Bourgogne: the Edict of 1548—The Farce, the Sotie, and Parliamentary censure: end of Mediaeval Comedy—Influence of the Mysteries and Moralities on the destiny of the French Theatre.

COMEDY continued to flourish in the sixteenth century under the form of the Morality, the Farce, and the Sotie, and, in conformity with the traditions of the preceding century, remained the faithful mirror of the chief political events of the time.

The good days of the Theatre were under Louis XII. Even the most audacious comedies were patronised by the king, from political motives. By protecting the Farce and the Sotie, Louis XII.

preserved them in a measure for his own uses, hoping thus to exploit the stage as a tool to work upon the minds of his subjects, and attach them to his cause. He did not even shrink from sacrificing his *amour-propre*, and permitted himself to be constantly attacked and ridiculed at the theatre on the score of his avarice. A farce called *La Résurrection de Jenin Landore*, written about 1509, doubtless at the king's wish, abounds in allusions to the war with Italy, and the struggles of France with the Pope, with Spain, and with Venice. In 1510 came the rupture of Louis with Pope Julius II. This was due to the disloyal conduct of the Pontiff, who had suddenly turned against the French after summoning them to Italy as his allies. Since this struggle assumed a religious character, Louis XII. needed the support of his people to engage in a war with one who was recognised by all French Catholics as their spiritual leader. In this emergency he called the Theatre to his aid, and the poet Gringoire, at the king's order, composed different farces with the direct object of exciting the Catholics against the Pope, and thus winning them to the cause of their sovereign. The Carnival Fêtes were used for playing these farces, the most famous of which is *Le Jeu du Prince des Sots.*

This piece was acted on Shrove Tuesday, February 25, 1512, and the king himself is believed to have assisted in the performance. *Le Jeu du Prince des Sots* is divided into three acts or parts: the sotie, the farce, and the morality. The prin-

cipal abstract personages are the *Seigneur de la Lune*, who symbolises the part of the inconstant ones; the *Seigneur du Plat d'Argent*, who personifies the poets, often without a roof to their head; the *Prince des Sots*, who is no other than King Louis XII.; *Mère Sotte*, the Pope; and lastly, *Sotte Commune*, who stands for the peasants. Louis XII. won his cause; but the Pope found some zealous defenders in the provinces, particularly at Lyons, where plays in honour of the Sovereign Pontiff were performed publicly in the market-place. Unfortunately, none of these plays have come down to us.

In the reign of Francis I., who succeeded Louis XII., political allusions were rarely tolerated. In any case, the *rôle* of the Political Comedy in Paris became that of mere description. In this order of idea may be cited *La Farce morale des trois pèlerins et Malice*, which dates from the year 1520: it gives us a very complete picture of contemporary manners, at the same time setting forth the Lutheran doctrine. From this period, indeed, began the active propaganda in France in favour of the Reformation spreading from Germany. The first Reformers perceived that the Theatre was a considerable force in the diffusion of their doctrines, and to this end wrote a great number of comedies and pamphlets, with the object of discrediting the Catholic religion. The most celebrated of their plays is *La Farce des Théologastres*, composed about 1525. The characters in this play are: *Théologastre*, or theology; *Fratres*,

or the monks; *Reason*; *Faith*; the *Mercury of Germany*, who personifies Luther. Théologastre and Fratres discuss with Text and Reason the contradictions of the Councils, and the Mercury of Germany arrives, boasting that he is going to bring in light, and cure Faith, whom he declares to be very sick. To this end he washes Text in the Holy Scriptures, blackened by the theologians of the Sorbonne; and after this operation Faith recovers his ancient vigour, and the piece ends.

In the provinces the Theatre was more free, and did not scruple to mix in politics after a general fashion. One celebrated farce, played at Rouen in 1536, is that of *Les Sobres-Sots*, which is filled with allusions to the political affairs of the moment, such as the edict against those who harboured Lutherans (1535), the tortures of the heretics burned in Paris, the expeditions of Charles v. to Tunis, Piémont, and Provence.

The Reformation in France dates from the first year of Henri II. From that period, and down to the accession of Henri IV., comedy was often the instrument by which the Reformers attacked their enemies and set forth their own doctrines. The Catholics, on their part, resorted frequently to the same means for their defence. In 1558, at La Rochelle, a famous farce called *La Maladie de Chrétienté*, a violent satire against the Christian religion, was played before the King and Queen of Navarre. The principal characters of the play are Hypocrisy and Christianity. The latter, having fallen into a serious sickness after absorbing

the poison of sin, refuses the ministrations of a third person, the Heavenly Doctor, who signifies Christ. Christ then forces him to swallow a syrup of justifying grace, and Christianity is at once relieved. The physician then undertakes an analysis of the poison absorbed, and this analysis is nothing more than an attack against all the powers that be—in particular, the clergy. Marguerite of Navarre, sister of Francis I., was herself the author of several farces written in favour of the Reformation. The best known is that entitled *L'Inquisiteur*. The Church began to resent these attacks; and, in 1559, an edict was published at Nantes, by the terms of which it was forbidden to perform in public any farces, comedies, or moralities which had not previously been approved by the chief curé, officer, or magistrate.

The Catholics more than once resorted to the Farce as a weapon against their religious adversaries, but their plays were weak and had little success. The best of them is *La Farce morale du maître d'école, la mère et les trois écoliers*, which is a direct attack on Luther. The Reformers replied by *La Comédie facétieuse et très plaisante de Frère Fécisti en Provence*, which contains all sorts of outrages against the Pope, the Sorbonne, and the monks. The excesses of this play contributed in large measure to disgust the public with Political Comedy. In the later years of the reign of Henri III. it was seen less and less frequently, and by the accession of Henri IV. it had entirely disappeared from the stage.

Towards the middle of the sixteenth century some genuine little dramas were composed, under the name of Moralities, taken sometimes from history, or from historical legends, sometimes inspired by sensational contemporary events. These compositions, while insignificant in appearance, marked a date in the history of the French Theatre. They were, in fact, the first step towards a National Drama in the English sense ; a drama, that is to say, released from the tyrannical exigencies of the 'rule of the three unities,' and gay, pathetic, and animated, without recourse to antiquity, or to the surrounding nations. If this type had found acceptance, the dramatic genius of France would have revealed itself half a century sooner. The Romantic School would perhaps have essayed its forces at the same moment as Shakespeare, that is, more than two hundred years before the publication of the Preface to *Cromwell*; and the *bourgeois* drama of Ducis and Diderot would also have seen its destinies advanced by two centuries.

The most famous of these dramatic moralities are the plays entitled *Un Empereur qui tua son neveu*, and *La Tragédie Française à huit personnages, traitant de l'amour d'un serviteur et de tout ce qu'il en advint*, both taken from contemporary history. Among the dramatic moralities in which the subject was drawn from the sources of ancient history, we have a pretty play founded upon a celebrated anecdote related by Pliny the Elder. It is the story of a woman condemned to death

as a traitor to her country. Her daughter, who has vainly sued for pardon from the judges, obtains instead the favour that her mother shall not perish by a violent death, but shall suffer the pains of starvation. Permitted to visit the prisoner in her cell, this girl, who is married and is at the moment nursing her child, nourishes her mother, thus prolonging her life for six weeks, to the stupefaction of every one. Detected by the gaolers, she is denounced to the judges, who are struck with admiration, and pardon the condemned mother.

While Comedy was flourishing in the sixteenth century, the Religious Drama continued to enjoy a certain popularity, at least till 1550. The Mimed Mystery of the fifteenth century, though supplanted by the Spoken Mystery, made a few last efforts in Paris during the first quarter of the sixteenth century; but, as we have already seen, it changed its character after 1458—the allegorical element having come in to replace the purely religious element. Thus the two mimed mysteries represented in 1514 and 1515, the first on the entry into Paris of Mary of England, the other on the entry of Francis I., were pure allegories. In the provinces the mimed mystery preserved its religious character. It was derived from the scenes of the Old and New Testament, and was usually played at the Feast of Corpus Christi, on sumptuous scaffolds. This was particularly the case at Draguignan and at Béthune, which were celebrated for the magnificence of their processions at the Fête-Dieu.

The Spoken Mysteries in Paris were the monopoly of the Brothers of the Passion, who played them on Sundays and Feast days in a permanent theatre. Thus between 1500 and 1539 the *Passion* and the *Mystère du Vieux Testament* were represented in the Salle de la Trinité. Yielding, however, as we have seen, to the demands of the spectators, who began to weary of the monotony of these performances, the Brothers subsequently arranged with the Enfants Sans-Souci to act farces, and henceforward mingled the pleasing and the severe, to the great satisfaction of their audience. In 1539 the Brothers established themselves in the Hôtel de Flandres, where they performed *Les Actes des Apôtres* and *Le Vieux Testament.*

Five hundred characters took part in *Les Actes des Apôtres,* which was played on Sundays and Feast days, from Easter to All Saints. The mystery of the *Vieux Testament* was given in the following year, and its performance caused considerable annoyance to the Confraternity. The licentious character of the drama attracted the attention of the Parliament, and they forbade its performance in public, but the Brothers took no notice. This dispute between the Confraternity and the Parliament contributed not a little to the popularity of the show. The attacks aimed against the immorality of the play stimulated the curiosity of the Parisians, who resorted in masses to the theatre, and thus made its fortune. The play was so run after that Antoine, King of Navarre, passing through Paris on a week-day, and being unable to

prolong his stay till the Sunday, solicited the favour of a special performance. The authorities acceded to his request, and he was thus enabled to applaud this highly religious, but also very indecent, mystery. Finally, however, the Parliament won its cause from Francis I., who sanctioned the former interdict, by the terms of which it was forbidden to the Brothers to introduce into the mysteries any profane, licentious, or ridiculous scenes. It further profited by this opportunity to exact obedience to the statutes limiting the duration of the performances and the price of seats. Since their removal from the Hôpital de la Trinité, the Brothers had, in effect, increased their prices, which in any case did not exceed two *sols*, and had lengthened the performances, which should have been over by five in the afternoon. In 1547 the Hôtel de Flandres was demolished, and the Brothers settled finally at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, Rue Mauconseil. Less than a year after, the Parliament issued its famous edict of November 17, 1548, by which the performance of sacred mysteries was forbidden, while the Confraternity was still licensed to perform moralities and farces. This edict, at the same time, conferred on them the exclusive monopoly of the theatre in Paris and in the suburbs. The performances of mysteries at the Hôpital de la Trinité and the Hôtel de Flandres, between 1500 and 1547, numbered about eighty. Between 1547 and 1576 not more than fifteen were given. Finally, during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the number of performances dropped to

eight. After 1548, moreover, not a single play had been composed of the nature of the true mystery.

Exiled from the capital, the Mysteries took refuge in the provinces, where they were suitably represented throughout the second half of the sixteenth century. Those most frequently performed were: the *Sacrifice d'Abraham*, at Chartres, Laval, Metz, Lyons, Nancy; the *Saint Jean-Baptiste*, at Chaumont, Lyons, Draguignan; *La Passion*, at Rouen, Argentan, Auxerre; *La Résurrection*, at Angers and Douai; and *Le Vieux Testament*, at Lyons and Draguignan.

The Mysteries were proscribed in Paris, in 1548. Neither were the Farces and Soties in any brilliant case at that moment. As early as 1536, the Basochians and the Enfants Sans-Souci had been forbidden to make allusion to any person whatsoever in their plays. In 1537 they were compelled to submit the manuscripts of their comedies to the censure of the Parliament. The rigours of the law applied to those who did not submit to this preventive measure, as well as the restrictions pertaining to the institution itself, disgusted authors and actors alike with the theatre.

Mediaeval Comedy weakened year by year, after 1550, and towards the end of the sixteenth century it entirely disappeared. During the whole of this period three regular dramatic companies were giving performances: the Brothers of the Passion, the Basochians, and the Enfants Sans-Souci. Along with these three societies, there were also

troops of wandering comedians, histriones, mountebanks, art and trade guilds (who gave occasional performances), and burlesque societies, which flourished in particular at Rouen and Dijon, and whose spectacle consisted mainly in processions.

The influence of the Mystery on the destinies of the French Theatre was *nil*. Between Sacred Drama and Classical Tragedy there was nothing in common; the passage from the one type to the other took place without any transition, and from the one day to the next the Drama underwent a radical alteration in form and matter. The influence of the Morality upon Comedy was quite otherwise; the evolution occurred in regular order. The Morality in shedding off its abstract personages developed naturally into the Comedy of Character, such as *L'Avare*, *Le Misanthrope*, *Tartuffe*, of Molière; and later (in the eighteenth century) the *Turcaret* of Lesage; *Le Curieux Impertinent*, and *L'Ingrat*, of Destouches. The Farce, in its turn, in becoming regularised, developed into the Comedy of Manners inaugurated by *Les Précieuses ridicules* of Molière; illustrated in the eighteenth century by the plays of Dancourt; and in the nineteenth by those of Picart, and, above all, of Labiche.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

V

ALLEGORICAL COMEDY, THE INTERLUDE, THE PAGEANT, AND THE MASK IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Religious Moralities: *The Castle of Perseverance*—Dogmatic moralities—Moralities of a scientific cast—Political moralities: *Albyon Knight*—Dramatic moralities—Remarks on the moralities; their representation—John Heywood and the Interlude—The Pageant—The Mask; its different characteristics—Representations between 1512 and 1580—Influence of the Morality upon the future of Comedy—Influence of the Interlude—Influence of the Mask upon the Theatre of the sixteenth century.

It was pointed out in Chapter III. that the allegorical element had made its appearance in the Coventry Plays, as early as the second half of the fifteenth century, thus heralding the approach of the Moral proper, which was already flourishing in France at the same epoch.

The first regular piece of this type in England is the religious Moral of the *Castle of Perseverance*, which dates from the reign of Henry VI. The subject of this play is the warfare carried on against Humanum Genus (the human race) and his companions, the Seven Cardinal Virtues, by the Seven Deadly Sins and their commanders, Mundus, Belial, and Caro. He is besieged by them in the Castle

of Perseverance, where Confessio has bidden him take up his abode; and in his old age he gives way to the persuasions of Avaritia. His soul is finally arraigned by Pater sedens in judicio, and apparently saved at the last. This action is a type of the general contents of these moralities, as exhibiting the contest between the good and evil powers for the soul of man. There are indications of a French origin for this Moral Play: it may have been based upon a French Morality of the year 1506, which treats of the same subject. *The World and the Child* (printed 1522, but written earlier) is another simple but effective Moral. Man is represented in the several stages of his life; first he appears as Infans, and then, under the names of Wanton and Manhode (given him successively by Mundus), wages a long struggle with the Seven Deadly Sins. The allegorical personages are Conscyence, Perseueraunce, Repentance, etc.

The teachings of the Reformation are implied, though with no controversial intention, in the Moral of *Every-Man*, written before 1531 by a Catholic, in favour of his religion. Every-Man is summoned before the divine tribunal to give an account of his life. There he is forsaken by his companions Felowship, Jolyte, Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty. His Good-Dedes alone are true to him, and with Knowledge introduce him to Confessyon, who finally absolves him. The Moral of *Lusty Juventus*, written in 1550, in the reign of Edward VI., by R. Wever, is the first play in

favour of the Reformation. The anonymous piece of *New Custome*, printed in 1573, and the *Conflict of Conscience* (1581), are purely controversial. The latter is especially interesting, inasmuch as it for the first time contains a character taken from actual history.

Besides these Morals of a religious tendency, we find two others, probably belonging to the Reformation period (reign of Henry VIII.), which indicate the wide range of ideas opened to the literary mind by the Renaissance. The *Nature of the Four Elements* teaches the advantage of the pursuit of science, urged on Humanity by Natura Naturata, Studious Desire, and Experience, while he is tempted astray by Sensual Appetite and Ignorance. The second, entitled *Wyt and Science* (by John Redford), resembles the preceding; the principal characters are Wit, Science, and 'father Reson,' and on the other side, Idleness, Ignorance, and Tediousness.

Among the Political Morals, *Albyon Knight* takes an important place. Fragments only of this play have come down to us, but its object would appear to have been to remove the ill-feeling on the part of the commonalty against the nobility, as well as the jealousy between the lords spiritual and the lords temporal.

The Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London, another Political Comedy (printed in 1590, referred to above as an allegorical piece), is conjectured by Collier to have been the work of the actor named Robert Wilson. The Ladies are Lucre, Love, and

Conscience, wooed by three series of gallants: Policy, Pomp, and Pleasure (Lords of London), Pride, Ambition, and Tyranny (Lords of Spain), Desire, Delight, and Devotion (Lords of Lincoln). The London and Spanish Lords engage in a contest manifestly intended to refer to the times of the Spanish Armada, in which this play must have been written (about 1588).

During the second half of the sixteenth century, a great number of plays were composed on the boundary line between Morals and Comedies or Tragedies, in which we find allegorical abstractions and real human characters or types; showing, in fact, the rapid progress of the Moral Play towards true Comedy. In this category, the allegorical personages generally occupy the largest place. Such is the case with the play, *Tom Tiler and his Wife*, where allegorical characters, Desire the Vice among them, mix with Tom Tiler and Tom Tailor. In the *Nice Wanton* (1560), Iniquity figures along with 'Three branches of an ill tree, The Mother and her children three, Two naught and one godly.' Bale's *Kyng Johan* (1548), and *Apius and Virginia* belong to the same class of moralities in virtue of their allegorical personages, though the action and the main characters are historical.

It was not until the reign of Edward VI. (1549), that the Moral Plays, as a weapon in the hands of the parties hostile or favourable to the Reformation, acquire interest as a mirror of the religious struggle. And their ascendency was of brief

duration, for the final triumph of the National Drama was at hand. From 1549 to 1575 these moralities were acted by troops of strolling players, for the most part in the castle halls and country-houses, on holidays. The public performances took place in the courts and galleries of inns, on scaffolds erected for the occasion. It was the duty of a herald to explain the play in a prologue before the performance began. These travelling bands consisted of four or five actors only. The chief player took the part of the Vice, and was also director of the company; the female parts were acted by boys. From the beginning of the sixteenth century the great nobles, the Percys, Oxfords, Buckinghams, had their private companies of players, called the 'servants' or 'players of the nobility.' It was only when not in the service of the nobles to whom they were attached that these companies travelled to the towns, where, from 1575, they obtained from Queen Elizabeth permission to set up their scaffolds on the market-places, instead of installing them in the inn-yards. The Moralities dwindled in importance after 1580, and disappeared entirely from the stage at the commencement of the seventeenth century.

The Moral was followed, in the early part of the sixteenth century, by another type of comedy—the Interlude, which marked a new step in development, for it delivered the Drama from allegory. It was in fact true comedy, but without divisions or sequence. This type, which corresponds to the French Farce, was perfected by John Heywood

(died 1565), who unfortunately found no imitators. The three Interludes for which we are indebted to him, and which illustrate this hardly developed type, are: *The Mery Play between Johan Johan the Husbonde, Tyb his Wyfe, and Syr Jhon the Preest* (composed in 1533); *The Four P.s: the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary, the Pedlar* (1540); and *The Mery Play between the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and negbour Pratte* (printed 1533, but apparently written before 1521).

Alongside of the Mysteries and Morals, a fourth type of play was flourishing in the principal towns of England, more particularly in London — the Pageant, a sort of allegorical spectacle which assumed the form of a procession, and was used to celebrate such events as the entry of the sovereign into London after a successful war, or visit to some provincial town. This type of play really corresponded with the Mimed Mystery of France. The first Pageant on record dates from 1236, and celebrated the marriage of Henry III. with Eleanor of Provence. The finest pageants were those exhibited at the election of the Lord Mayor. This kind of drama occupied a very secondary place in the history of the English Theatre, for it had no influence upon the latter other than to develop the taste of the masses for play-going. Several of the poets and dramatic writers of the time of Elizabeth exercised their ingenuity upon these Pageants; and Peele, Munday, Dekker, Thomas Heywood, and Middleton contributed to this class of production. The Pageants were maintained till the

beginning of the seventeenth century as a regular spectacle. And, indeed, this mode of theatrical entertainment has left its traces to our own day, since the election of the Lord Mayor is celebrated year by year in London by a magnificent procession, which is nothing more than the Pageant of the Middle Ages.

The first experiments in the Mask, another dramatic type which was to be regularised later on by Ben Jonson, date from the commencement of the reign of Henry VIII., about 1512 or 1513. The play began in a dialogue, sung or spoken, which took the place of the explanatory prologue. This was followed by a series of dances, executed at first by the masks alone, then by couples formed of these and the partners they chose from among the spectators; and finally, after a set of varied figures, men and women alike were confounded in a general maze. Sometimes, however, the songs were multiplied until they constituted the cardinal part of the play. The principal idea round which the different parts of the mask evolved themselves had to be gay; a note of seriousness might be added to it, but only in the form of some elevated thought. The poet was charged with the general plan, and the duty of writing down the words to be recited, or more often sung to the accompaniment of violins and wind instruments, was also incumbent on him. The poet, again, had to draw up an account of the play. This included the description of scenes and costumes as well as of the dances, with an account of the literary part. The author had, moreover, to

mention the names of his collaborators, and to praise the nobles and courtiers who had taken part in the play. This printed booklet was preserved as a precious token by those who had assisted at the performance. The poet's collaborators were the mechanician, the painter, the leader of the orchestra, the director of the ballet. The artistic part of the Mask was executed by the gentry, the purely dramatic parts being interpreted by professionals. In the reign of Mary Tudor a sort of mask was played entitled *The Pageant of the Nine Worthies*. A State document of the year 1563 is filled with details referring to the expenses of a Mask given in that year. Other documents of the period, dated 1571, 1574, 1575, 1576, and 1580, allude to the expenses of staging at these different periods.[1] In fact, in the reign of Elizabeth, Masks were seldom represented at court, for the Queen shrank from the enormous expenses entailed by this sort of spectacle. It was not till some few years later, in the time of James I. and Charles I., that the Masks assumed any real splendour.

The influence of the Moral upon the destinies of Comedy was not so much felt in England as in France. As was shown in Chapter IV., the comic element reached an appreciable development in the Miracle Play. The greatest service rendered by the Moral under these circumstances was that it accustomed men's minds to shake off the yoke of tradition, and to exercise their faculty of invention. The introduction of the secular element under the

[1] *Theatrical Scenery and Effects*, Henry B. Baker.

form of an abstraction was, moreover, too arid and too far from the reach of ordinary minds to determine the establishment of a dramatic type; hence, as we shall see later on, it was the study of national history, joined with a knowledge of foreign literature, which was to make of a mere sketch a complete and durable work.

As to the Interlude, its action was in some measure *nil*, for the influence of the Classical and Italian type had already been confirmed for some years in the Drama, when the farces of John Heywood made their appearance on the scene.

Although the Mask had not attained its full development by the end of the sixteenth century, it was, even at this epoch, exerting a certain influence on the Drama. Shakespeare did not disdain to compose a play on this model. In fact, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is nothing more than a Mask; and if the name has been denied it, this is only because the play was designed for the theatre and not for the court. The great poet, by introducing the type afresh in *The Tempest*, gave triumphant witness to its dramatic utility.

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

VI

CLASSICAL DRAMA AND THE SCHOOLS OF THE RENAISSANCE BETWEEN 1550 AND 1588

First translations of Greek and Latin plays—First performance of a Classical Tragedy—The School of Jodelle; its innovations—Criticism of Sainte-Beuve—The School of Garnier; character of his plays—His imitators—Italian plays, and the first French comedies in prose—*Les Corrivaux*—Larivey and the comedy of *Les Esprits*—Influence of Italian plays upon Comedy in France—Influence of the Latin Theatre—Classical Comedy superior to Tragedy.

While Comedy was perishing from the restrictions imposed upon it by the censors, the study of the Ancient Theatre had begun to inaugurate new ideas, and was insensibly preparing the way for a regular system of dramatic composition. In France the imitations were preceded by translations. One of the first of these was the *Iphigeneia* of Euripides, done into French by Thomas Sibillet, and published in Paris, 1549.[1]

Saint-Gelais translated six comedies by Terence; Charles Estienne translated *The Andrian Woman* by the same author; Lazare de Baïf, the *Electra* of Sophocles and the *Hecuba* of Euripides. But

[1] See at the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris, *L'Iphigénie d'Euripide poète tragique: tourné de grec en français par l'auteur de l'art poétique.* Paris, in the library of Gilles Corrozet, 1549. (Signed Thomas Sibillet), 1st edition.

to Pierre de Ronsard belongs the honour of introducing the Classical Theatre on the French stage. He was not more than eighteen when he put the *Plutus* of Aristophanes into French verse, and gave a performance of the comedy, in which he, as well as his fellow-students, played a part, before the director of the Collège de Caqueret, where he was then finishing his studies. This event took place in 1549, and its brilliant success determined the most literary minds of the period to pursue this line of dramatic reform.

Étienne Jodelle placed himself at the head of the movement, and became leader of the school. His tragedy of *Cléopâtre*[1] appeared in 1552, and is the first really French classical tragedy; followed later on by his *Didon*. His disciples plunged into the same vein. From La Péruse we have the tragedy of *Médée*; from Jean de la Taille, *Saül Furieux*; from Antoine de Baïf, a translation in verse of the *Antigone* of Sophocles. Guérin, in his turn, composed *La Mort de César*.

As Sainte-Beuve has pointed out, it was in Tragedy that the innovations of the school of Jodelle were remarkable, for it passed without any transition from the Christian Mysteries to the Tragedy of Antiquity. The theatre, moreover, instead of being a public hall such as the Hôpital de la Trinité, or the Palais de Justice, was the refectory or dormitory of a college. In place of artisans,

[1] See at the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris, '*Les Œuvres et Meslanges poétiques d'Estienne Jodelle, sieur du Lymodin*. Vol. i.: *Cléopâtre captive*, Tragédie; *Didon se sacrifiant*, Tragédie; *L'Eugène*, Comédie'; MDLXXIIII, 1st edition.

the authors were themselves the actors, and enjoyed the satisfaction of applause from a sympathetic audience. 'The tragedies of the school of Jodelle,' says Sainte-Beuve, 'whether in *Cléopâtre*, *Didon*, *Médée*, or *Antigone*, are remarkable in this, that, as in Greek Tragedy, the action is simple, the characters few in number, the acts short, composed of only one or two scenes, and interspersed with choruses. The unities of time and place are strictly observed; the style is distinguished by its pretensions to nobility and seriousness. Nevertheless, these plays are but pale imitations of the Ancient Tragedy, of whose grandeur and magnificence they give no conception.'

At the close of his life Jodelle suffered the total eclipse of his renown by the successes of Garnier. This writer composed six tragedies on the Greek model, with choruses, but characterised, like those of Seneca, by sententious phrases and abuse of rhetoric. This is especially the case in *Hippolyte*, *La Troade*, and the *Antigone*.

The other plays likewise borrow something of their plot from the Latin Drama. Be this as it may, however, the historians of the period were unanimous in discovering in the works of Garnier a force of conception and a vigour of style which set them far above the tragedies of Jodelle, and marked a new step in the evolution of the Drama. Unfortunately, the result did not justify this prediction, even for the two most brilliant disciples of Garnier, Montchrestien and Billard. Montchrestian, it is true, exhibits a certain independence,

in borrowing from contemporary history the subject of his two tragedies, *L'Écossaise* and *Marie Stuart*, but he did not venture to go further in the path of reform. The plays of these two poets are generally political tragedies, modelled on the pattern of Sophocles and Euripides, in which, along with the public characters of the period, one finds choruses of different kinds.

In the meanwhile, the infatuation of Europe, and of England in particular, for the Italian plays, had penetrated to France. The first translation was that of *Les Abusés*, by Charles Estienne.[1] Jean de la Taille translated the *Gli Suppositi* and the *Negromante* of Ariosto. This writer is supposed to be the author of the first regular prose comedy, *Les Corrivaux* (1562).

To Larivey, however, belongs the honour of having formally introduced prose into comedy, in 1579. A native of Italy, but speaking French with surprising perfection, he sought to acclimatise Italian Comedy in France. To this end he modified its external form, suppressed the foreign *mise-en-scène*, naturalised the names of characters as well as places, and yet respected the foundation of his models, throwing into relief whatever was original in them. He placed in Comedy a number of types which have been adopted permanently, *e.g.* the dishonest valet and the swaggering soldier.

[1] See at the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris: *Les Abusez, comédie faite à la mode des anciens comiques, premièrement composée en langue Tuscane, par les professeurs de l'Académie Scénoise, et nommée Intronati, depuis traduite en Françoys par Charles Estienne, et nouvellement reveuë et corrigée.* A Paris, par Estienne Groulleau demourant en la rue Neuve Nostre Dame à l'enseigne Saint Jean-Baptiste, 1556.

His greatest merit was, perhaps, that he taught the art of cleverly embroiling a situation, introducing into French Comedy the imbroglio unknown to the authors of the Mediaeval Theatre. Larivey is the author of a dozen pieces written in prose, the most remarkable of which, taken from the *Aridosio* of Lorenzo de Medicis, is the comedy of *Les Esprits*, where he draws his situations from the works of Plautus and Terence. Molière found inspiration in this play for the *École des Maris* and the *Avare*. Regnard also took from it his *Retour Imprévu*. For the justification of this revolution in the dramatic art, Larivey insisted on the fact that the *Querolus* of Plautus, and other lost comedies of great value, were written in prose. He also invoked the example given by Bibiena, Piccolomini, and Aretino, whose plays also are in prose.

Although Larivey occupies the first place in the history of the Old Theatre, next to the author of *Maître Pathelin*, the impulse given by this writer found no following, and up to the time of Molière the Prose Comedy had no serious disciples.[1]

At the same time we must recognise that the influence of the Renaissance upon the destinies of Comedy had been fortunate. We have already seen the action of the Italian Drama; that of the Latin Theatre was no less appreciable, since we owe

[1] We must, however, except the prose comedy of *Le Pédant joué*, the work of Cyrano de Bergerac, written towards the end of the seventeenth century, which had a considerable success.

Bibliothèque Nationale: *Les Œuvres diverses de Monsieur Cyrano de Bergerac*, vol. iii., *Le Pédant joué*, Comédie. A Amsterdam, chez Jacques Laborde, Libraire, M.D.CCXLI.

to it the division of the plays into acts and scenes, which was unknown before the Renaissance.

The classical comedies of the period inaugurated by the *Eugène*,[1] a play in verse by Jodelle, are admittedly superior to the tragedies, for they were for the most part written with great talent; but on the other hand they were nearly all immoral and coarse, and little suited for the stage of the college theatres, which enjoyed a monopoly of these classical pieces. In fact, none of the works of Jodelle, Garnier, La Péruse, de la Taille, or Larivey were ever represented at the Hôtel de Bourgogne or any other public place. It is true that in 1584 a troupe of comedians, whose nationality is unknown, played for some days at the Hôtel de Cluny, and gave a certain number of pieces from the Pléiade, but this theatre was a strictly private hall.

[1] See note on p. 187.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

VI

CLASSICAL DRAMA IN ENGLAND BETWEEN 1550 AND 1588

The first regular Comedy, imitated from Plautus; analysis of *Ralph Roister Doister* — Influence of the Italian Renaissance — Translations and adaptations of Latin plays between 1559 and 1566—First performance of a tragedy of Greek origin: the *Jocasta* of George Gascoigne—The first regular Tragedy, imitated from Seneca; analysis of *Gorboduc*—The second regular Tragedy, and its relations with the Latin Theatre—Plays of Italian origin: *Romeo and Juliet*, *James IV. of Scotland*—George Gascoigne and the first Prose Comedy—Translations of French plays—The Classical Drama on the point of supplanting the Romantic Drama in England—Influence of Latin Tragedy and Italian literature on the destinies of the English Theatre—Performances of Latin plays in the Schools and Universities before and during the Renaissance.

THE first regular English comedy is *Ralph Roister Doister*, which dates from 1550. It was the work of Nicholas Udall, who was a master first at Eton, and afterwards at Westminster. Udall was a native of Hampshire, and died in 1556. The play is believed to have been acted the year of its publication at Eton, during the Christmas holidays. The writer has imitated the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus, adapting it to an episode of middle-class English life. The plot, which is divided into five acts, turns on the courting of a girl, who is already betrothed, by a despicable parasite. The young

lady has but a small opinion of her new admirer, but in the absence of her future lord pretends to be captivated by the charms of the second adorer. The matter threatens to turn out badly, for the imprudent creature is discovered by the servant of her lover. Happily the protection of an old friend, and the humble confession of his sins from the culprit, comes at the right moment to relieve the heroine from her embarrassment.

Gammer Gurton's Needle, the second proper English comedy, was the work of John Still, who was successively master of St. John's and of Trinity College, Cambridge, and died as Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1607. This play, which was acted in Christ's College, Cambridge (printed 1575), is inferior to its predecessor both in plot and style, but has the merit of owing nothing to antiquity, and of being an essentially national product.

The Italian Renaissance, which at this period was revolutionising French literature, had its counterpart in England. The most cultured minds of the period, as Wyatt, Spenser, and Surrey, were inspired by Italian poems. The gallants, in particular Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Philip Sidney—court ladies like Lady Jane Grey, the Countess of Pembroke, and the Princess Mary, were enthusiastic admirers of Italian poetry. England was inundated with translations of Italian romances, and it was an indispensable part of the education of every eldest son to make a sojourn of some months in the Eternal City. Under these conditions it was natural that dramatic literature

should echo the infatuation. Seneca's tragedy, which is one long series of declamations, was received with rapture in Italy, and so excited the admiration of the English also, that they made an especial study of this writer.

Between the years 1559 and 1566 five authors devoted themselves to the translation in rhymed verses of the works of Seneca. These were Jasper Heywood, who translated *The Trojan Women*, the *Thyestes*, and the *Raging Hercules*; Alexander Nevile, who translated the *Oedipus*; John Studley, who undertook the *Medea*, the *Agamemnon*, the *Phaedra*, the *Hercules on Oeta*; Thomas Nuce, who translated *Octavia*; and lastly, Newton, who translated the *Thebaïs*.

The first tragedy of Greek origin represented on the English stage was *Jocasta*, an adaptation of the *Phoenissae* of Euripides. This piece, acted in 1566, was written by George Gascoigne and Kinwelmarsh.[1]

In the interval, the first regular English tragedy had made its appearance. This was *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, played before Queen Elizabeth on January 17, 1561. This play was the work of two distinguished men of letters: Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Thomas Norton, the famous controversialist, to whom, as also to George Gascoigne, is due the credit of having suggested the use of blank verse instead of rhymed verses. The

[1] Peele also has been credited with a translation of the *Iphigeneia* of Euripides.

subject of *Gorboduc* is taken from an English legend, but the tragedy, which contains choruses, is modelled on the *Thebaïs* of Seneca. At the same time the authors have not entirely conformed to the 'rule of the three unities.' They have not observed the unity of place, for changes of scene are frequent in *Gorboduc*. This is the sole reproach made against this piece by Sir Philip Sidney, the eminent critic of the day, who considers it, save for this one fault, absolutely perfect. The tragedy in question is a mixture of dissertations and of philosophic reflections; the greater part of the action is supposed to take place behind the scenes, and messengers keep the spectators *au courant* with events. Each actor delivers his speech, and makes way for another. Each act is preceded by a dumb show, which is the pantomimic explanation of the events that are about to unfold themselves. The acts close with a chorus composed of the 'four ancient and wise men of England,' who reflect upon the situation, and educe the moral of the action. The plot is thus stated in the *Argument of the Tragedie*: 'Gorboduc, King of Britain, divided his realm in his lifetime to his two sons Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissension. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion, and slew father and mother. The nobility assembled, and most terribly destroyed the rebels; and afterwards, for want of issue to

the prince, whereby the succession to the crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war, in which both they and many of their issues were slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted.'[1]

The *Misfortunes of Arthur*, the second regular tragedy, was written by Thomas Hughes. It was acted before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich in 1587, by eight members of the Society of Gray's Inn. But the choruses, the dumb shows, and the arguments are due to different benchers, among whom was 'Maister Francis Bacon.' Although composed on the model of the Latin Tragedy, this play differs from *Gorboduc* in the treatment of its facts, and in its type reminds us somewhat of Euripides. In some ways it is an advance on *Gorboduc*, for it is less pretentious in tone, the verses are more harmonious, the dialogue more intimately bound up with the situations. The 'ghost' of Latin Tragedy plays an important part in this work, which, curiously enough, is written in blank verse.

Nor was England content during the Renaissance period with translating and adapting Latin plays; it sought inspiration for the composition of its tragedies in Italian plays and romances. The first attempt of the kind was undoubtedly the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*, a metrical paraphrase by Arthur Brooke of Bandello's *History of Romeo and Juliet*. Brooke's play, printed in 1562, has not come down to us. Another famous tragedy in-

[1] Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, I. 107.

spired by the study of Italian literature is *The Scottish Historie of James IV.*, to which we shall return later on, as an historical play. The plot was in effect furnished by a romance of Cinthio.

In Comedy the first imitation of an Italian play is the translation made by George Gascoigne of Ariosto's *Gli Suppositi.* This piece, the first English comedy written in prose, was represented at Gray's Inn in 1566. A second and no less famous comedy of Italian origin is *Tancred and Gismunda*, taken from Boccaccio's *Decamerone.* This play was originally written in rhyme, and acted in the Inner Temple, in 1568, before Queen Elizabeth; but on being republished in 1572, it was put into blank verse. The list of compositions of Italian origin closes, in 1578, with the *Promos and Cassandra* of George Whetstone, who took the story from a novel by Giraldi Cinthio.

The English repertory at the end of the sixteenth century comprised translations of French pieces also. In 1590 the Countess of Pembroke published her *Antony*, in blank verse.[1] Thomas G. Kyd also translated the *Cornélie* of Garnier, in 1594.

England was thus within an inch of submitting herself to Classical Tragedy, as had occurred in France, where the Theatre was unable to resist the tyrannical exigencies of Richelieu and of the Académie Française, on which the all-puissant minister imposed his will. Happily for England,

[1] Some English authors have attributed the original of this play to Robert Garnier, but this is not confirmed.

she had behind her centuries of tradition, for the Miracle Play, as we have seen, contained from the outset the elements of the Romantic Drama.

Queen Elizabeth, moreover, was no purist. She did not impose her taste upon the nation: the National Drama was able to give free vent to its instincts of realism. What contributed also in large measure to the emancipation of the English Drama was the predilection it early manifested for the study of historical events, a style to which Bishop Bale gave the first impulsion in his tragic morality of *King John*, 1548.

Generally speaking, the influence of the Latin Tragedy was advantageous to the English Drama. In this school the dramatic authors first learned the art of careful and harmonious construction, at the same time finding in it an example of sobriety. In the next place, it was Latin Tragedy that suggested the use of blank verse to English writers. And from the same source was derived the 'ghost,' of which Kyd, and Shakespeare after him, made such striking use in their works.

Italian literature, for its part, above all Roman literature, suggested a greater variety of subjects to the dramatic authors, and provided them at various times with the plot of their tragic or domestic situations; so that, in the absence of foreign influences, the development of Tragedy would have been indefinitely retarded.

In Comedy the influence of the Classic and Italian models was exercised in no such absolute fashion, for, as already pointed out, the dramatic

action of the Mysteries and Moralities made itself felt long before the Renaissance period. Yet without a knowledge of the Latin comic authors (Plautus and Terence) and a study of the Italian Comic Theatre, the final emancipation of the type would doubtless have been delayed by several years.

In addition to the dramatised English translations or adaptations from the Latin Theatre, a great number of plays written in Latin were performed in the sixteenth century. The first comedy represented under these conditions dates from 1520. It was called *A goodly Comedy of Plautus*, and is supposed to have been given for the amusement of the persons of distinction who were detained in London as hostages for the capitulation of Tournay. It was no uncommon thing, even at this epoch, to perform Latin plays before the learned societies, as well as in the schools of S. Paul's and Westminster. And from 1546 these performances came into vogue at the universities also, and a great number of such plays were represented between 1546 and 1564.

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

VII

THE THEATRE IN THE EARLY PART OF THE REIGN OF HENRI IV. (1589-1600)

The League and Spanish influence—Antonio Perez and English euphuism—The various plays represented between 1589 and 1597—Rule of the Three Unities threatened—Critical period in dramatic literature—Staging at the different halls or theatres—The Hôtel de Bourgogne—Use of hangings—Spectators on the stage—Women and the dramatic career.

Towards the year 1588 the studies of antiquity and the literary exercises were suddenly interrupted by the civil war. A party had formed in France in defence of the Catholic religion, which was said to be insufficiently protected by the king, Henri III. This party, the 'League,' was headed by the Duc de Guise, who, seeking to replace the House of Valois on the throne, with this object approached Philip II., King of Spain; who, on his side, cherished the secret hope of marrying his daughter to the young duke, son of the Leaguer, and thus making her Queen of France. Permanent relations were thus established with Spain. France was speedily invaded by Spaniards, whose language was diffused through the country. When they were expelled

in 1594 the ideas and modes that prevailed beyond the Pyrenees were not to be banished, and even Henri IV. set to work to learn Spanish. His master was one Antonio Perez, a former secretary of Philip II. This person, after quarrelling with the King of Spain, had taken refuge at the court of France, and played an important part in the literary revolution of the end of the sixteenth century. It was he who introduced into France the elegant but precious style of Spain, reinforced by the euphuism of John Lyly. From the court of Elizabeth, where he sojourned for some time, Perez returned with this style, or rather language, constructed of hyperbole and of absurd metaphor. In short, the taste for antiquity disappeared, to make way for the study of the masterpieces of Spanish literature, and in particular of the dramas of Cervantes and Lope de Vega. In 1594 the Basochians nevertheless reproduced the famous sotie of the *Prince des Sots*. In 1595 a French troupe of comedians, under Courtin and Poteau, acted farces and profane mysteries, licit and honest, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. In 1596 a Christian tragedy, entitled *Les Machabées*, was performed there; in 1597 *La Nouvelle tragi-comique* of Marc Papillon was represented with great success.

Even the college theatres were, like the Hôtel de Bourgogne, invaded from 1589 by all sorts of political manifestos.

In brief, the repertory included a little of all sorts: moral tragedies, allegorical or political pieces, tragi-comedies, tragic histories, farces, soties,

and even mysteries. It was a medley of all types, and in the midst of this general anarchy the 'rule of the three unities' itself was menaced. Marc Papillon had in some measure given the signal of this dramatic revolution, by changing the scene of action at every moment, in his *Nouvelle tragi-comique*. Lastly, an influential critic of the period, Pierre de Laudun, had pronounced formally against the rule of the twenty-four hours.

If Alexandre Hardy (of whom we shall speak below) had but had genius, 'coming under such opportune circumstances, he would,' says Sainte-Beuve, 'have found a magnificent part awaiting him. He might have created everything. No dogmatic precepts, no half-understood scruples fettered his instincts, and a vast field lay before him. Into our Ancient Theatre, into that of antiquity, into the literature of Spain, the long legendary histories and the many romances of chivalry then being published, and read with profit by the mighty Shakespeare, Hardy had but to dive, and to choose with no other law than the instinct of dramatic imagination, no condition but that of rousing emotion and giving pleasure. Imagine again the great Corneille, freed from the censures of the Academy, from bickerings with the Cardinal, from the regulations of d'Aubignac, not confined to the perusal of the latest Spanish literature, but feeding on more immediate, more national studies, and venturing on innovations by his sole genius—under such circumstances, we may well believe, the destinies of our Theatre would have

changed for ever, and paths of Tragedy, wider by far than those of the *Cid* or the *Horace*, would have opened to the talents of the great minds that followed. Hardy, alas, failed to grasp the situation.'

So long as the Moralities were allegorical in character the *mise en scène* was necessarily little complicated, since the Church, Virtue, and Vice to a certain extent supplied all the paraphernalia of the piece. But when it came to the performance of merry moralities, and of historical or political farces, the staging became luxurious enough, both with Basochians and with the Enfants Sans-Souci, and continued to be so until the Renaissance. Then came a further change : the Farce made way for the first essays in the Comedy of Character, imitated from Plautus ; and since there were now only general types, the *mise en scène*, rid of all external precision, fell into neglect, and finally disappeared altogether. The only decorations that remained were stretched sheets, marking the limits of the stage.

Independently of the Halls of the different societies or corporations, real theatres existed during the second part of the sixteenth century in several of the Colleges. The most famous were those of de Boncourt, Beauvais, and Reims, which each had their particular company, their own repertory, and fixed days of performances. Others, as those of de Guise, Coqueret, and Harcourt, had as actors their own pupils, or amateur societies. The Collège de Boncourt had a monopoly of the

works of Jodelle, and the *Sophonisbe* of Saint-Gelais was represented at the Hôtel de Reims. In these various Halls the staging was even more simple than in the public theatres: it consisted merely of hangings which hid the three walls at the back.

The Hôtel de Bourgogne, the most celebrated of all the theatres of the period, deserves a special description: 'The building in question bore little resemblance to what we nowadays call a theatre, and approximated more nearly to an office. The hall was vast, but low, in comparison with its dimensions, which admitted an audience of more than two thousand persons. The stage was of an extraordinary depth, since it was constructed for the representation of mysteries which involved a considerable number of actors. In performing plays which demanded little staging, the space was reduced by means of tapestry curtains, hung from the middle of the vast stage. The lighting, during the performances, consisted of a row of candles in front of the stage, which required constant snuffing. In addition, there was above the actors a chandelier with four branches, hung in the air, with four great yellow wax-candles. There were two superposed rows of boxes, and each box, fitted with wooden benches, could contain some dozen spectators, plunged in semi-obscurity. The pit, in which the audience stood, or moved about at will, was no better lighted than the boxes.'

It was in the use of tapestries or stretched sheets, employed as we have just seen in the public or

private theatres, that the idea originated of the fixed scenes and invention of corridors in the seventeenth century, for it was soon perceived that between the hangings and the walls of the stage a space could be contrived that might be transformed into passages for the use of the actors.

It was for a long time, but very erroneously, believed that the custom of seating the spectators at the wings of the stage (an English institution) had been adopted in France, as in England, about the middle of the seventeenth century. M. Germain Bapst has corrected this error, and shows that the custom was only imported into France at the end of the sixteenth century, that is, fifty years after its adoption across the Channel.

After 1578, when the Confrérie of the Passion began to let out their hall to different companies, the costumes, formerly one of the attractions of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, became mere sorry rags. This was because the different companies who played there in succession rarely covered their expenses. The entrance was only five *sous* in the parterre, while numbers of spectators forced their way in without paying.

The large boxes were rarely occupied, and at times the play could not take place for want of sufficient receipts to cover the expenses of the day. And this was from no lack of publicity, for the performances were generally announced by processions, when the actors, in costume, paraded the streets to the sound of music.

From the earliest period women figured in the

Mimed Mysteries, but it was only from the sixteenth century that their presence on the stage in Spoken Mysteries was recognised. They never appeared in the Comedies and Tragedies of the period, owing to the impropriety of these pieces.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

VII

THE NATIONAL DRAMA BEFORE SHAKESPEARE (1580-1600)

English Tragedy, and its origin—The Chronicle Plays or English History on the stage, between 1199 and 1588—The Tragedies: Melodrama of Kyd—Peele's Court Comedies—The dramatic repertory before Marlowe—Marlowe: his life and work—*Tamburlaine*, and adoption of blank verse—Other tragedies; their character—Characteristics of Marlowe's talent—John Lyly the precursor of Romantic Comedy—Introduction of Prose into the Drama—Peele's Melodrama—Greene and the first Romantic Comedy proper—Other predecessors of Shakespeare—Tragedies between 1585 and 1589—Definite substitution of blank for rhymed verse in 1589—The position of actor and of dramatic author in the time of Marlowe.

The Historical Tragedy is the earliest form of the English National Drama. It originated in a poetical work of a highly original character, entitled *The Mirror for Magistrates*, begun in 1557 by Thomas Sackville (Lord Buckhurst, Earl of Dorset). The aim of the author was to introduce all the names of unhappy and illustrious fame, from the Norman Conquest to the end of the fourteenth century. The poet accordingly descends into the infernal regions, led like Dante by 'Misfortune,' and obtains from the leaders of that dark realm the tale of their calamities. Sackville had only time

to write the political preface and the first legend; the work was continued by an ecclesiastic of the name of Richard Baldwin, together with an advocate of Lincoln's Inn, one George Ferrers. These called in the aid of Churchyard, Player, Skelton, Dolman, Seagers, and Cavyll, who, between them, produced twenty-eight legends, relating more especially to the chief events of the Wars of the Roses. The completed work gave fresh inspiration to Sackville and Thomas Norton. Stimulated by these earlier legends, they composed the first historical tragedy existing in English literature—*Ferrex and Porrex*, otherwise known as *Gorboduc*, which, as we saw above, was also the first English tragedy proper.

The *Chronicle Plays*, or Historical Tragedies, henceforward played the same part in England during the second half, and in particular during the last quarter, of the sixteenth century, as the Historical Comedies (*i.e.* the farces and soties) of France between 1440 and 1580. But while in France the Historical Comedies are only the statement under the form of satire of some political facts detached from the annals of the nation, and independent of one another, in England the Chronicle Play is the dramatic exposition as a whole of the chief events of one reign in chronological order. And while the French cared little for the form, and thought only of the pungency of the satire, the English were more occupied with giving at least a certain artistic unity to the play.

The list of historical pieces begins with *Kyng*

Johan, a pure morality which is thought to have been composed by Bishop Bale in 1548. It describes the disputes of the King with the Pope.

As we have seen, it was not till thirteen years later that the first Historical Tragedy proper was destined to appear; itself the second and only specimen of the type, during the period of nearly forty years subsequent to the publication of Bale's *Kyng Johan*. Between 1585 and 1590, however, some few anonymous Chronicle Plays were written. The first of these is *The Famous Victories of Henry Fifth*, a play written partly in prose, partly in blank verse, with no division into acts and scenes. It commences with the end of Henry IV.'s reign, and introduces the death of the King, the battle of Agincourt, and the marriage of Henry V. with Princess Katherine.

To the same epoch belongs *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*. This play is partly in prose, partly in verse, blank or rhymed. It treats of the same events as Bale's historical morality in regard to the struggle with Rome, and contains nearly all the incidents of Shakespeare's tragedy *King John*. In the same category we must place *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters, Gonerill, Ragan, and Cordella*. This play contains most of the incidents developed in Shakespeare's tragedy of *King Lear*, and was acted in 1593.

The regular series of Chronicle Plays, a true record of English history between 1199 and 1588, comprises, independent of the four plays mentioned

above, tragedies on the reigns of King John, Edward I., Edward II., Edward III., Richard II., Henry IV., Henry V., Henry VI., Edward IV., Richard III., Henry VII., James IV. (of Scotland), Henry VIII., and Elizabeth. These plays are Shakespeare's *King John*; Peele's *Edward I.*; Marlowe's *Edward II.*; *Edward III.* by Marlowe and Shakespeare; *Richard II.*, Shakespeare; *Henry IV.*, *Henry V.*, *Henry VI.*, Shakespeare; *Edward IV.*, Thomas Heywood. Ford composed a tragedy of *Perkin Warbeck*, which deals with the historical events of the reign of Henry VII. Between this last piece and Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.* may be placed Greene's famous tragedy *The Scottish Historie of James IV.*, which refers equally to the events of the reign of Henry VII. Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.* also inspired Samuel Rowley, who wrote on the same subject his play, *When You see Me, You know Me.*

The historical drama by Dekker and Webster, called *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, follows on to the reign of Edward VI., and gives the contemporary events of the reigns of Mary Tudor and Elizabeth.

Lastly, the tragedy of *If You know Me not, You know Nobody*, the work of Thomas Heywood, which deals with the same subject, closes the series of these Chronicle Plays.

After assuming the character of the historical play, the English National Drama next underwent a phase of 'blood and death.' Kyd must be regarded as the inventor of this new style, a sort of prolonged tempest in which the author has

recourse to all the means proper to inspire terror: blows, cries, suicide, murder, madness. In short, the tragedies of Kyd are pure melodrama, in which the 'ghost' of Seneca once more plays a part. Kyd's plays, from the point of view of their violent situations, mark a considerable advance on the two first Anglo-Classical tragedies, *Gorboduc* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. Two plays are attributed to this author which are more particularly stamped with this bold character, *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Soliman and Perseda*.

Another play of 'blood and murder' is the tragedy of *Hoffman, or a Revenge for a Father*, by Henry Chettle, whose works, like those of Kyd, aided in the formation of the Romantic Drama.

Another play we must quote, which had its hour of celebrity, was Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, in rhymed verse, written in 1584. This work contained the elements of the Classical Drama and the Mask, and constitutes a dramatic type, known under the name of the Court Comedy. Peele was also distinguished as a writer of Chronicle Plays, and his *Famous Chronicle of King Edward I.* was acted in 1588.

Accordingly, before the invention of the Romantic Tragedy, and after the disappearance of the Mysteries and Morals, the theatrical repertory comprised comedies on the model of Plautus and Terence, tragedies like those of Seneca, historical plays, romances and dramatised incidents of private life, with the so-called 'court' or 'complimentary' comedies.

To Marlowe belongs the honour of having amalgamated these different elements, and of having, by a process of selection as well as of exclusion, created the Romantic Tragedy, the highest expression of the dramatic temperament in England. Christopher Marlowe was born at Canterbury, 1563-64. Educated at the King's School in that city, he subsequently entered the University of Cambridge and took his Arts' degrees in 1583 and 1587. He then became a literary adventurer in London, where he remained for the rest of his life. He died at the early age of thirty, stabbed in a tavern brawl. His five tragedies were produced between 1586 and 1593, that is, in less than seven years. After his death an unfinished tragedy of *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, was found among his papers, dating from the outset of his career. This work betrays his hesitations between blank and rhymed verse. Marlowe has been termed the father of English tragedy. He was in fact the first to feel that Romantic Drama was the sole form in harmony with the temperament of the nation, and consequently the only type with a future before it.

As has been said, he began by putting order into the mass of materials bequeathed him by his predecessors. Next, he had the good taste to feel that blank verse, so dear to pedants, must be retained from the classical school, which for the rest he entirely eschewed. Before his time the Drama was only a vast spectacular display, arranged in scenes, and seasoned with coarse pleasantries. Marlowe transformed the substance of the Drama,

suppressing trivial situations, and introducing a new class of heroic subjects which breathed the spirit of the time.

Tamburlaine the Great, which appeared in 1587, is remarkable as the earliest tragedy written in blank verse for the public stage. In it the poet strained the force of diction to the utmost, in his determination to show that blank verse could create as powerful an effect as rhyme. *Doctor Faustus*, the next tragedy, composed in 1588, is a fairly close adaptation of the German *Volksbuch*, a prose account of the life, death, and adventures of Doctor Faustus. This work relates the struggle between Christianity and magic, with some account of natural philosophy, as it was conceived at the end of the fifteenth century, just before the Reformation. Marlowe's tragedy has no plot, and is not divided into acts. At first sight it appears to be a careless dramatic version of the buffoonery and necromancy of the German original. Marlowe introduces no female character; but his magnificent picture of the perdition, agony, and final ruin of Faust established his right to be classed as a great tragic poet.

The Jew of Malta, the next play, appeared in 1588, and is remarkable for the powerful character of Barabas, the avaricious Jew, from whom Shakespeare derived his Shylock in the *Merchant of Venice*, substituting, however, for Marlowe's imaginary type a really human character.

Edward the Second, which dates from 1590, is one of the most perfect of Marlowe's tragedies.

It marks a great step in the career of dramatic history, and is an advance on Peele's play, *The Famous Chronicle of Edward I.* Marlowe seems to have been inspired by two tragedies (authors unknown) for his *Edward II.* The titles of these plays were, *First part of the Contention between the two famous houses of York and Lancaster*, and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York.* Marlowe's work is remarkable for its dramatic power, but inferior to that of its models from the point of humour, in which he is totally lacking. The play is in blank verse interspersed with rhyme, and contains numerous classical quotations.

The *Massacre of Paris*, also written about 1590, is the weakest of Marlowe's tragedies. It refers to the struggle of the Duc de Guise with the party of the Huguenots, but does not agree with historical tradition.

One of the characteristics of Marlowe's talent is that he went through no period of experiment, and had no models. His first tragedy shows him in full possession of his talents, and constitutes him the creator of a type destined to revolutionise the dramatic art. His characters are the product of his imagination, and not the fruit of study and observation. They are pure ideal conceptions put into drama. Marlowe errs unfortunately by his complete lack of humour. Nor was he capable of tracing a single real feminine character, and is in both these points far below Shakespeare, whose genius was as marked in the one as in the other.

The plays of John Lyly constituted a fourth

dramatic type, intermediate as it were between Classical and Romantic Comedy. This writer, born 1554, in Kent, is more especially known in France as the inventor of Euphuism, imported into the court of Henri IV. by Antonio Perez. Lyly's plays are remarkable for their frequent allusions to history and mythology, as well as their repeated borrowing from classical sources. They even contain Latin quotations, interpolated with the scenes of real life. From the clever amalgam Lyly made of the Classical Drama and the Mask, came the Romantic Comedy of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Fletcher.

The greatest service, however, which Lyly rendered to the Drama, was that of introducing prose, and thus giving the first example of a lively and animated dialogue. His principal comedies are *Endymion, the Man in the Moone* (first printed in 1591); *Mydas*; *Gallathea*, a kind of panegyric on the virtues of Queen Elizabeth, and represented before her by the 'Children of Paul's.'

Peele, of whom we have already spoken as the author of classical masks and chronicle plays, continued, after Marlowe, the tradition of the School of Kyd, by his play *The Battle of Alcazar*, which is pure melodrama. This play was written about 1591. Peele further composed an interlude or farce, *The Old Wives' Tale*, curious in the sense that it possibly furnished Milton with the subject of his *Masque of Comus*. Peele's productions had no serious effect on the progress of the Drama. His only merits lie in his elegant descriptions,

ingenious use of mythology, and charm of versification.

Robert Greene, born in Norwich 1560, wrote one noticeable play, *The Scottish Historie of James the Fourth, slaine at Flodden*, 1598, referred to above as an historical piece. But it further marks an evolution in the history of the English Drama. It is, in fact, the first piece to contain all the elements of the Romantic Comedy, of which Lyly only laid the foundation. Greene is the first dramatist who was able to develop his action forcibly, to invent a host of motives, to mingle the sublime, the grotesque, the sad and gay, so as to produce a happy result. His influence upon the future of the Shakespearean Drama was accordingly very considerable.

The other predecessors of Shakespeare are Thomas Lodge, who wrote two tragedies of merit: *The Wounds of Civil War*, and *A Looking-Glass for London and England*; Nash, the famous author of *Summer's Last Will and Testament*; Anthony Munday, who collaborated with Chettle in *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington*, the first domestic tragedy.

The plays of these several authors are anterior to 1600. Robert Greene, in fact, died in 1592; Marlowe in 1593; Kyd in 1594; Nash produced only one work, in 1592; Thomas Lodge wrote nothing after 1594; Peele died in 1597; Lyly in 1600.

Between 1585 and 1589 the tragedies of these different poets were in rhymed verse, with the

exception of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. The substitution of blank for rhymed verse, in 1587, provoked a desperate resistance from Nash and Greene; but the opposition was overcome by 1589, and Marlowe remained undisputed master of the situation. For the rest, the poet was the recognised leader of this group of writers, who bowed to the superiority of his genius.

All these men of letters came of good families, were fully educated, and had, generally speaking, taken their degrees at Oxford and Cambridge. With the exception of Lyly, who took service with the Court, these authors worked for editors, as well as for the public theatres, and lived on the products of their labours. They withdrew from society, and led a Bohemian existence, giving themselves up to every imaginable licence, so that the discredit attaching in those days to the profession of actor and dramatic author is readily understood.

There is good reason to suppose that Greene, notwithstanding his violent attacks on Shakespeare for being an actor, was of the profession himself, as were also Marlowe, Peele, Nash, and Thomas Lodge.

THE THEATRE IN FRANCE

VIII

ALEXANDRE HARDY, ROTROU, AND THE FRENCH STAGE PRIOR TO THE ADOPTION OF CLASSICAL TRAGEDY (1600-1640).

Hardy and the strolling troops of actors—Hardy's fecundity; his principal plays; their sources—Hardy and the Hôtel de Bourgogne between 1600 and 1617—The dramatic repertory between 1618 and 1629—Hardy's troop, and rival companies—Prices of entrance at the Hôtel de Bourgogne—First real French actors—First comedians on the stage—Character of performances at the Hôtel de Bourgogne; the public—The Prologue to the play—The *entr'actes*—The system of stage-decoration down to 1625—Character of staging after 1625—Hardy as a dramatist—Hardy and Tragi-Comedy—Hardy and the Pastoral Play—Rotrou, the heir to Hardy's style; his first plays—The 'Rule of the Three Unities' between 1628 and 1636—Rotrou's principal plays—Poets contemporary with this author—Religious Drama in the seventeenth century.

LITTLE is known of Alexandre Hardy before the end of the year 1593, when it is believed that he engaged himself in a strolling company of players. These 'troupes de campagne' (as they were called) were generally formed in Paris during Lent.

This season of penitence was a respite for the actors, and they profited by it to engage companies of ten or twelve actors to travel in the provinces after Easter. The best companies included a special poet and a decorator (who was

generally enlisted on the scene of the performance). If not sufficiently wealthy to afford themselves a poet, the company was content to act pieces that had been already printed, and in default of even these, arranged to reproduce others of which the rival companies possessed the manuscript. With the exception of certain great centres such as Lyons, Rouen, Bordeaux, which were famous for their love of the theatre, and where they remained for some time, the companies made but a short stay in each place.

Under these circumstances their best profits were derived from private performances bespoken either by some rich *bourgeois* on the marrying of his daughter, or by some *seigneur* who turned the hall of his château into a theatre, to the gratification of his guests. The fairs and gatherings of the provincial Estates were particularly propitious to these public performances, but the municipalities imposed heavy conditions on the companies, and levied a substantial sum on their earnings for the poor of the district.

As we said, the best-appointed companies had their poet, and it was the collaboration of the prolific author Alexandre Hardy that secured for his players an ascendency over the other nomad troops. After some years' apprenticeship in the provinces, Hardy returned to Paris, where between 1598 and 1600 he engaged himself in Valeran's company, the most famous of those which performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. He remained attached to this company till his death, that is to

say, till 1631, or 1632, and faithfully kept the promise made to his leader to supply him with as many plays as he wanted.

During the greater part of his career of authorship Hardy received in payment only the proportion that came to each member of the company after the performances. It was only in the later years of his life that he sold his plays to the director of the company, who paid for them in advance. The remuneration was little enough. It varied from two to five crowns.

Hardy is reckoned to have composed an average number of twenty plays a year, for a period of thirty years, which brings the sum-total of his productions to six hundred. No manuscript of this author is extant. Happily, a certain number of his plays have been printed. These are *Les chastes amours de Théagène et Cariclée*, printed in 1623. This publication was followed, in 1624, by a volume which appears to be the first of a series, and contained eight plays, namely, *Didon*, *Scédase*, *Panthée*, *Méléagre*, *Procris*, *Alceste*, *Ariadne*, and *Alphée*.

Then, in 1625, appeared *Le Théâtre d'Alexandre Hardy, parisien*, vol. ii., which included *Achille*, *Coriolan*, *Cornélie*, *Arsacome*, *Marianne*, *Alcée*, *Le Ravissement de Proserpine*, *La Force du Sang*, *La Gigantomachie*, *Félismène*, *Sidère*, and *Le Jugement d'Amour*.

Vol. iii. was published in 1626, and contained the six last plays of vol. ii. *Sidère*, however, was now called *Dorise*, and *Le Jugement d'Amour* became *Corinne ou le Silence*. Vol. iv. was published

at Rouen in the same year (during a tour in the provinces), and consisted of the seven following pieces: *La Mort de Daïre*, *La Mort d'Alexandre*, *Aristoclée*, *Frégonde*, *Gésippe*, *Phraarte*, *Le Triomphe d'Amour*. In 1628 appeared vol. v., containing six pieces: *Timoclée*, *Elmire*, *La belle Égyptienne*, *Lucrèce*, *Alcméon*, *L'Amour Victorieux ou Vengé*. Hardy sought inspiration for his plays in the French translations of the principal Greek, Latin, Italian, and Spanish authors. Plutarch's *Lives* was the work he most frequently put under contribution. Among Latin writers his models were Virgil, Ovid, Quintus Curtius; among the Italians, Tasso, Boccaccio, Giraldi Cinthio, the author of the *Hundred Novels*, translated into French by Chappuis; among Spanish authors, Cervantes, whose works inspired the composition of *Cornélie*, *La Force du Sang*, *La belle Égyptienne*.

When Hardy and Valeran's troop took possession of the public theatre in Paris, in 1599, they brought their provincial repertory with them. These were romantic stories in the genre of *Huon de Bordeaux*, but instead of merely being divided into days like their predecessors at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, they were subdivided into acts. The repertory comprised, in addition, regular tragedies taken from Greek or Roman history, such as *La Mort d'Achille* and *Coriolan*; or from Jewish history, such as *Marianne*; plays that were still very classical, but more dramatic than those of Garnier, and written for the theatre proper, and not for college halls or private reading.

Tragi-Comedy, an entirely new style, also appeared at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, as well as the ancient Farce, which always took the sympathies of the Parisians. Hardy was the sole author who supplied the Hôtel de Bourgogne between 1599 and 1617. But in that year he found a rival in Théophile, whose play of *Pyrame et Thisbé* obtained an enormous success. Next, in 1618, he had to reckon with the *Arténice* of Racan. In 1620 Mairet came into prominence by his representation of *Sylvie*. In 1625 the *Amaranthe* of Gombaud was performed; in 1626 and 1627 *Sylvanire* and *Les Galanteries du Duc d'Ossonne*, by Mairet. In 1628 Rotrou came forward with his *Hypocondriaque*. Lastly, in 1629, Corneille gave *Mélite*, and in 1634 Mairet brought out *Sophonisbe*, the first tragedy in accordance with the rules of Classical Drama.

Yet the success of these last authors mattered little to the troop of Valeran, in comparison with the competition of the Italian companies introduced by Henri IV., Marie de Médicis, and Anne of Austria. At first they played at the Court, but subsequently removed to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where the novelty of their acting and its wealth of gesture tickled the curiosity of the spectators. Other formidable rivals to Hardy's troop were the jugglers at the Fairs of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent, who, like the Confrérie of the Passion, had their special privileges. The most serious rivals were the troops from the Foire Pont-Neuf and the Place Dauphine, who gave

performances all the year round. There were found the trestles of Mondor, the king of charlatans, and of Tabarin, king of jesters, whose shows did great injury to the Theatre in Paris.

M. Félibien tells us, in his *Histoire de la Ville de Paris*, that the price of places, which in 1609 were five *sous* in the parterre and ten *sous* in the boxes, were doubled by 1634. Moreover, as was shown in the last chapter, numbers of spectators managed to pay nothing at the theatre, including the musketeers and their lackeys, who made their way in by main force. All the members of the king's household, too, had rights of free entrance. Under these conditions the profits were often very modest, and if the company had not had its provincial tours, it would have maintained itself with difficulty.

The first actor deserving of the name at the Hôtel de Bourgogne is Valeran, who, with his colleague Vautray, achieved his greatest successes between 1599 and 1628. During the greater part of this period the serious parts were taken by Robert Guérin (or *La Fleur*) and Hugues Guérin (*Gaultier Garguille*), who from 1622 was distinguished in tragedy for his acting of the king's part. Henri Legrand (nicknamed *Turlupin*), was also famous from 1622, in the parts of valets and knaves. But it really was rather as buffoons than as tragedians that these actors were distinguished.

From 1628, however, public taste began to improve. Disgusted with the coarseness of the farces, people now took real interest in the representation

of serious pieces, more particularly in the tragedies of Hardy. This change enabled women (till now excluded from the stage by the impropriety of the early buffooneries) to figure in the new repertory; and the apparition of La Bellerose, La Beaupré, and La Valliotte, the three first actresses, exerted a happy influence on the fortunes of the Theatre. At the same time the vulgar buffoons were replaced by men like Bellerose and Mondory, that is, by real actors capable of giving brilliant representations of serious comedy and tragedy.

The first Tragedies were constructed on the lines of the Mystery, and were played on several consecutive days: as the tragi-comedy *Théagène et Cariclée*, which lasted eight days. The performances took place on an average three times a week at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. They began at two and ended at four in winter, and somewhat later in summer. At the outset Valeran announced his performance by the sound of a drum, but this form of publicity was gradually relinquished in favour of pompous posters. The name of the poet or author did not, however, appear on the play-bill till after 1625. About this period the *harangue*, which contained the praises of the piece, replaced the prologue of former days.

The theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne was badly lighted, and its narrow corridors often became the scene of the worst disorders. It was thronged by pages, lackeys, students, needy authors, and disreputable women. Pickpockets frequented it in numbers. They often got up

scuffles, profiting by the general confusion to carry off what they could. In short, down to 1628, the public of the Hôtel de Bourgogne was a turbulent, gross, immoral world, with a little core of educated people.

Previous to 1625 the performance began with a prologue, which was generally a mixture of coarse and obscene reflections, redeemed by occasional flashes of wit. Yet the prologue might be of a serious character, and turn on subjects such as honour, friendship, the excellent qualities of man; although it invariably terminated with praises of the piece, and a *réclame* for the actors.

The *entr'actes* were filled by a kind of symphony, executed with a flute, drum, and two or three violins.

Although Farces were above all in vogue at the beginning of the seventeenth century, few new ones were written. The old pieces were performed over and over again, with a few fresh topical allusions. The farce over, the play was brought to an end by a song crammed with coarse jests, a style in which Gaultier Garguille made a great reputation.

In taking possession of the stage at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, as let out by the Confrérie, Hardy was obliged to preserve the system of staging in vogue for the Mysteries, the owners of the theatre of course not wishing to modify it, as they thereby economised the loss of much costly decoration. But it must be remembered that for some time past the character of the staging had been gradually

improving in the direction of realism. In the first place the 'mansions' had been fitted with doors, that could open or shut, according to the exigencies of the stage. Next, tombs and funeral pyres were introduced. Lastly, the use of curtains hinted at the approach of successive scene-shifting; while, as we saw above, battles and executions figured in the theatre from the outset of the sixteenth century. Hence there were already openings out of which Hardy could enlarge the system of decoration, which from now onwards was threefold—

1. The stage was divided into several compartments, forming an *ensemble*.

2. The decorative system was mixed, that is to say, there might be on the one hand a number of compartments forming an *ensemble*, on the other several distinct compartments, independent of each other as well as of the principal group.

3. The decoration was multiple; in this case the several parts were absolutely distinct in themselves, and the audience had to suppose these parts at a variable distance one from the other. If the scenes were to approximate, the actor, passing into the next compartment, continued his monologue or dialogue. If, on the contrary, the scenes were supposed to be apart, the actor quitted the stage almost running, and only entered the next compartment after a certain lapse of time, with every appearance of fatigue, and expressing his satisfaction at the happy termination of his journey.

After 1625, when the taste for the 'classical rules' had begun to assert itself seriously, Hardy, in order

to reconcile the interests of his stock decorations with the requirements of Aristotle's *Poetics*, conceived the notion of retaining multiple decoration on the stage, but at the same time making his characters act regardless of it, thus giving the piece the unity denied it by its staging. In fine, Alexandre Hardy was brought by force of circumstances to serve as the transition between the art of the Middle Ages and the Classical School. At the outset of his career he inclined to the side of the romantic English and Spanish Schools, under whose influence he had come, and whose liberty, for the rest, was no more than that of the Mediaeval Mysteries. This tendency is exhibited principally in his tragi-comedies. In the later years of his life, yielding to the general trend, Hardy endeavoured to give a more classical character to his system of decoration, and this tendency is more particularly to be seen in his tragedies.

As a dramatic writer properly so-called, the *rôle* of Alexandre Hardy is by no means clear or well-defined, for, as a matter of fact, he did not compose a single tragedy that was of interest to the spectators, nor did he create one original tragic type. At the same time it must be recognised that he, more than any of his predecessors, gave depth to his characters, and enlarged his situations, keeping the Drama more strictly within the limits of unity and of reality. Moreover, he suppressed the choruses (although they are to be found in some of his early plays), lessened the importance of the monologue, and consequently increased the number

of scenes. From all these different points of view he played a useful part, and his work is of real value, inasmuch as it prepared the way for Rotrou and Corneille.

The best of all his plays is *Marianne*, the numerous errors of which are atoned for by a real vigour of style.

Although the play of *Bradamante*, by Robert Garnier, published in 1582, goes by the name of a tragi-comedy, it must be regarded only as a variety of the type which Hardy had really created. The Tragi-Comedy of this author is distinguished by a mixture of tragic and comic, by the introduction of characters of very different social position, by (generally speaking) a happy climax, by the romantic character of the subjects, and lastly, by its more or less free treatment. The Tragi-comedy is divided into a certain number of days. The principal tragi-comedies of Alexandre Hardy are *Théagène et Cariclée*, *Cornélie*, *La Force du Sang*, *La belle Égyptienne*.

In addition to tragedies and comedies, Hardy's repertory included pastorals. The Pastoral is a play inspired by the charms of country life, the characters being shepherds and shepherdesses.

It came to the birth in Italy, in the sixteenth century, as a very distant development of the Eclogue. The origin of the eclogue again reaches back to the fifth century of Athens, for all its elements are contained in the Satyric Drama. This type is, moreover, easily recognisable in the comedy of *The Cowherds* by Cratinus, contem-

porary with Aristophanes, and in another play, *The Rustics* of Menander, which dates from the end of the fourth century.

The one writer of merit who can be claimed by the School of Hardy is Rotrou. In him we see the last representative of a style which would undoubtedly, and before long, have secured the ascendency of the Romantic Drama over the Classical Theatre, if the tyrannical exigencies of Cardinal Richelieu had not intervened to divert the French Drama from its natural courses.

Rotrou was born at Dreux on August 27, 1609. At the outset of his career he was most probably, like Hardy, associated with a strolling company, whom he supplied with pieces. In 1628 his first work, *L'Hypocondriaque*, was produced. This tragi-comedy, which is only a series of dialogues and episodic scenes with no marked action, is remarkable for its graceful invention and harmonious versification. In the same year he made a great success at the Hôtel de Bourgogne with his comedy, *La Bague de l'Oubli*. This was the epoch at which the famous literary dispute as to the 'Rule of the Three Unities' was beginning to occupy public attention. The all-powerful Richelieu, posing as leader of the School, had set up as a principle the dictum that everything was to be subordinated to the rule of the twenty-four hours. Corneille in his *Mélite* (1629), Mairet in his *Sophonisbe* (1634), the two first regular pieces, had respected the desires of the Cardinal, even in permitting themselves a certain licence. Tristan in his

Marianne, Benserade in *Cléopâtre*, La Calprenède in *Mithridate*, had inclined the balance in favour of the 'rule of the three unities,' when the performance of *Le Cid*, at the Théâtre du Marais, in 1636, determined the final adoption of Classic Drama on the French stage. After this representation, in effect, Scudéry and Mairet, appealing to the poetics of Aristotle and of Horace, showed that the *Cid* had sinned against the unity of action, by compressing into twenty-four hours the events that took four years in history. Corneille, who was seeking an opportunity of regaining the Cardinal's good graces, admitted the justice of these reproaches, and thereby gave the signal for a general submission to the exigencies of the classical method. Rotrou alone refused to take up this line, and while professing the greatest admiration for the drama of Corneille, affranchised himself all his life from the 'rule of the three unities.'

In some twenty years he composed about thirty-five plays: tragedies, tragi-comedies, and comedies. His most remarkable tragedies are *Antigone*, *Iphigénie en Aulide*, *Wenceslas* (1647), and *Saint-Genest* (1649). This last work contains an extraordinary mixture of the *naïf* and the profound, the comic and the sublime. In it Rotrou showed himself the precursor of Victor Hugo. His three best comedies are: *Les Captifs*, *Les deux Sosies* (played in 1636, the same year as *Le Cid*), *Don Bernard de Cabrère* (1647).

Rotrou, whom Voltaire holds to be the real founder of the French Theatre, died in 1650, at

the early age of forty-one, the victim of his civic devotion.

His collaborators in other less well-known pieces were Boisrobert, Pierre Corneille, Colletet, and l'Estoile, whom he met at the house of Richelieu; but no other poets of the epoch attained the eminence of Corneille and Rotrou.

Among the contemporary productions, not more than three or four passable tragedies can be quoted: Tristan's *Panthée*, Scudéry's *L'Amour Tyrannique*, *Le Comte d'Essex*, by La Calprenède. In the department of comedy *Les Visionnaires* of Desmarets, *Don Quichotte* of Guérin de Bouscal, deserve special mention.

We have already seen that in the last quarter of the sixteenth century there were only eight performances of Miracle Plays in Paris. With the seventeenth century this order of performance disappeared entirely from the capital. On the other hand a large number of plays were composed and acted till about 1625, under the name of Tragedies, which were really nothing more than disguised Mysteries. The most popular of these religious dramas were the tragedies of *Caïn et Abel*, of *Sainte Agnès*, *Saint Jacques*, and *L'Histoire des Machabées*.

The provincial representations of Mysteries did not come to an end abruptly at the close of the sixteenth century, but they became gradually less and less frequent. Hardly do we come upon three or four real Mysteries such as *La Conversion de Sainte Marie-Magdeleine*, *Le Mystère de la*

Nativité, played in certain towns in the south of France at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The tradition was kept up only in Brittany, where performances of mysteries and miracle plays took place into the nineteenth century.

IX

THE THEATRE OF THE MIDDLE AGES ON THE STAGE, IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

IN FRANCE.—Liturgical Drama in 1821—Open-air performances in Brittany—Sacred Drama at Morlaix: the ceremony of August 15, 1898—Public representation of a Mystery in Paris: May 30, 1898—Latin Mysteries at the Seminary of Strassburg—Sacred Drama in the theatre at Strassburg, 1816—Mysteries in Paris theatres at the beginning of the nineteenth century—The sacred plays of MM. Grandmougin and Haraucourt at the close of the nineteenth century—Mediaeval Farce, at the Comédie-Française and the Odéon, at the end of the nineteenth century—The Monologue, and the Stage of to-day.

IN ENGLAND.—Unpopularity of the Mystery in England—The Pageant and the Lord Mayor's Show—Revival of the Mask in London: 1899 and 1900.

IN FRANCE

IN the north of France Sacerdotal Drama occupied the sanctuary of the church at certain periods of the year, down to the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

M. Onésime Leroy relates that in 1821 a priest, appointed shortly before Christmas to the charge of a Flemish village, of whose customs he was ignorant, had just begun the midnight mass, when he suddenly perceived an artificial star shining over his head. At the same moment a band of shepherds and shepherdesses came dancing and leaping into the church, followed by some of their

flock. The stupefied *curé* tried to interfere, but his merry parishioners did not understand him, and only leaped the more, finally depositing their offerings of eggs and cheese at the foot of the *crèche*.

The Mystery, as performed in the market-places from the thirteenth century, is still represented in certain parts of Brittany. A *Vie de Sainte Nonne*, which dates from that period, has been played continuously in different villages of this pious district. But it is at Morlaix, in Finisterre, that the cult of the Mediaeval Theatre has been preserved with the greatest enthusiasm. The representation of the Mysteries there seems never to have been seriously interrupted. This survival has of late years attracted the attention of the literary world, who, as early as 1889, attended the interesting performance of the old mystery, *Joseph Vendu par ses Frères*. The *mise-en-scène* and acting were, however, a lamentable departure from tradition. This was perceived by an educated townsman, M. Cloarec, the mayor of Plougean. He wanted to approximate more exactly to the past, and therefore banded together all the young people from every trade—labourers, blacksmiths, clerks, drivers, farm-hands—thus forming, on the model of the early corporations, a troop of fifteen actors, who for some years gave representations in a barn in the vicinity of Morlaix.

M. Cloarec, however, was ambitious; he dreamed of reconstituting the Theatre of the Mysteries with absolute historical fidelity. With this in view he

convened a congress of all the literary men of Brittany, including also some of the Parisian literary societies, and on August 15, 1898, the new theatre, an exact reproduction of that of the Middle Ages, was inaugurated under the presidency of M. Gaston Paris, of the Académie Française. This theatre was in fact set up in the open air, against the wall of the cemetery, with a natural background of foliage, completed by magnificent hangings, the work of the fine painter Dezaunay. The religious drama chosen for this occasion was the *Mystère de Saint-Gwennolé* (the patron-saint of mariners), which was admirably interpreted by the little company of M. Cloarec. The performers undertook to play each year in different parts of Brittany, and even proposed a visit to Dublin, Ireland having sent a delegate to the first official representation of the renaissance of the Breton Theatre of the thirteenth century.

In Paris it was the students of the different faculties who undertook, at the end of the nineteenth century, to revive the theatrical exhibitions authorised by Charles VI. in 1402 in the heart of the capital. They gave, in fact, on May 30, 1898, a representation, in the open Place de la Sorbonne, of the *Mystère d'Adam*, which made the complete impression of a spectacle that had been forgotten for nearly five hundred years. The open-air theatre consisted of a large stage of several inclined planes. The hindmost of these represented Paradise, with the tree of good and evil. After their fall, Adam and Eve descended to the first plane, where two or

three barrow-loads of earth signified the garden they were going to cultivate. The centre of the stage represented a public space, and the entrance to Hell was there depicted as a dragon's mouth. The costumes were of rigorous historical accuracy: God wearing a long white beard, and a dalmatic of the same colour. Eve wore a white peplum, Adam a red tunic.

The representation being after the fifteenth century, the *meneur* (according to the custom of that time) recited to the public, under the form of a prologue, a verse of the Scriptures, to which the chorus responded by chanting other verses. After Adam and Eve have eaten the apple, an angel with a sword appears as sentinel at the gate of Paradise. Adam and Eve begin to dig their little garden, and while, broken with fatigue, they take a short rest, the devil and his assistants plant thorns in the ground. At sight of this disaster the two victims give vent to cries of despair, but Satan and his devils put them in chains, and carry them off to Hell, whence a thick smoke is seen escaping. The piece was very well played, and highly applauded by the Parisian public, who shared the interest of reviving a past so distant and so full of interest. After giving the *Mystère d'Adam*, the students interpreted the *Fête des Fous* with the same success.

During the early part of the nineteenth century some representations of Mysteries, less comformable indeed with historical tradition, but none the less interesting, were also given at Strassburg.

The pupils of the Jesuit College there were in the habit of performing every evening, in the fortnight before the holidays, Latin Mysteries, composed upon the different subjects of the Old and New Testament, from the Creation to the Crucifixion. This custom dates back to the year 1769.

Some highly original performances of Mysteries were also given in the large theatre of Strassburg in 1816. These consisted of a series of tableaux, which were the exact representation of the principal events of the life of Christ, after the pictures by the great masters of the same subjects. There was no spoken part, merely some religious chanting accompanied at times by quiet gesture. Under these curious conditions were represented the *Annunciation* of Guido; the *Disciples of Emmaus*, by Titian; Rembrandt's *Offerings of the Wise Men*; Rubens' *Peter washing the Feet of Christ*; *The Descent from the Cross*, by Raphael. The public theatres of Paris also attempted at two different moments in the last century, at its outset and its close, to give performances of Religious Mysteries, and thus indirectly to link the modern stage with the Theatre of the Middle Ages. The year 1817 was the *point de départ* of this curious dramatic innovation, and the newspapers of the day speak with great admiration of a *Mystère du Vieux Testament*, played with applause at the Théâtre Porte Saint-Martin; of another religious drama, *Le Passage de la Mer Rouge*, represented at the Gaîté; and a religious pantomime, entitled *Daniel, ou la Fosse aux Lions.*

This dramatic style, forgotten for nearly half a century, reappeared on the stage some twenty-five years ago, and has since then held its own, notably at certain seasons of the year, as at Christmas and at Easter.

Among the Sacred Dramas most relished by the public, we must in the first instance note the works of the two fine poets and dramatic authors: MM. Charles Grandmougin and Edmond Haraucourt. The first, with his sacred drama *Le Christ* and his famous mystery *L'Enfant Jésus*; the second, with his admirable mystery of *La Passion*, have secured the final triumph of the Evangelical Drama on the stage of the Parisian theatres. Nor must we omit to mention the *Mystère de Noël* of M. Bouchor, with choruses and music, and *La Rédemption* of M. Charles Vincent.

The Dramatic Morality may be regarded as an extinct type since the sixteenth century. As was shown above, it was transformed into the Comedy of Character.

The Farce, which was written in prose during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, was afterwards transformed into the Comedy of Manners, and left as its prime *chef-d'œuvre* to the modern stage the famous *Maître Pathelin*, which since 1872 has very properly been included in the repertory of the Comédie-Française. Some other minor satirical pieces of Mediaeval Comedy, such as *Le Cuvier*, *Le Pont aux Ânes*, were played at the national theatre of the Odéon in 1897 and 1898.

The isolated monologue of the sixteenth century came into fashion again at the end of the nineteenth, and enjoyed as much popularity in private drawing-rooms as it did upon the stage. *La Grève des Forgerons*, by François Coppée, may be taken as the masterpiece of this type.

In England

The career of the English Miracle Play is not supposed to have extended beyond the sixteenth century.

Massinger's *Virgin Martyr*, however (played in 1619), as well as Shirley's *S. Patrick for Ireland* (performed in Dublin, 1640), while entitled respectively a drama and a comedy, are really the two latest specimens of the Miracle Play.

Sir Henry Irving, the famous actor, endeavoured to revive this style, forgotten for more than two hundred and fifty years. Under his direction *The Gift of Tongues* was put on the stage in London some few years ago; but the experiment was a complete failure, and has not been attempted since.

The Moralities and Interludes have completely disappeared from the stage since the seventeenth century, although in July 1901, the Elizabethan Stage Society gave three highly interesting performances of the Moral Play of *Every Man* (*ante*, p. 178), revived from a copy of the original manuscript still existing in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral. This was followed by 'an episode' from the Chester Miracle Plays, written in the fourteenth century, and known as the *Sacrifice of*

Isaac (*ante*, p. 119). These performances took place in the Master's Court of the Charterhouse.

Every Man was played again at University College, Oxford, in August 1901.

The Pageant, or Allegorical Pantomime, which survived into the eighteenth century as a recognised spectacle, has left appreciable traces in the annual procession of the Lord Mayor's Show, which is in fact the Pageant of old days.

The Mask, after slumbering for two hundred and sixty years, made a triumphant reappearance in June 1899 at the Guildhall, where the Art Workers gave a fine performance of a mask composed on the model of Ben Jonson, entitled *Beauty's Awakening, A Masque of Winter and of Spring* (by A. Ashbee). This very artistic effort met with great success, and led to the production, eight months later (February 1900), of a second mask entitled *Peace and War*, which was especially got up by the *élite* of London society in aid of the soldiers wounded in the Transvaal. In this the different parts were undertaken by well-known members of society, and the performance in every way resembled the splendid shows of the seventeenth century.

THE THEATRE IN ENGLAND

X

THE ROMANTIC DRAMA OF SHAKESPEARE AND HIS SUCCESSORS (1590-1642)

1. Life of Shakespeare

In 1557 a respectable merchant of Stratford-on-Avon, John Shakespeare by name, glover, tanner, and wool-merchant, married Mary Arden, daughter of a wealthy yeoman farmer at Wilmecote. The child of this union was William Shakespeare, the greatest dramatic poet England has produced, born April 23, 1564. Though the point is uncertain, it is generally supposed that the boy was sent at the age of seven to the Grammar School of Stratford, where during seven years he learned all that was then taught in such foundations—literature and history, Greek, and, above all, Latin. Shakespeare's Latin studies (in particular the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid) were destined to be of peculiar utility to him later on, in the translation of French and Latin works, by which he was frequently inspired in the composition of his plays. Mr. Sidney Lee, in his recent study on the great poet,[1]

[1] *Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 14 *et seq.*

has attacked the theory of Shakespeare's ignorance of foreign languages, and holds that many of the works put under contribution for the plots of dramas were never translated into English. Sidney Lee, moreover, remarks with justice that 'a boy with Shakespeare's exceptional alertness of intellect, during whose school-days a training in Latin classics lay within reach, could hardly lack in future years all means of access to the literature of France and Italy.'

The holidays of each year were spent by William Shakespeare with his uncle, who owned the property at Snitterfield (an hour and a half on foot from Stratford), where his father had been born. Often, too, he stayed at the neighbouring farms with friends or relations of the family; and it was in these rural visits, sharing the outdoor life of the occupants, and mixing in the games of their children, that Will Shakespeare drank in his ardent love of nature, and the profound knowledge of country life, with which his plays are saturated. Owing to his father's circumstances he was taken away from school at the age of fourteen, and never had the university education which in those days was an almost indispensable complement to the training of a man of the world. From fourteen to eighteen Shakespeare stayed with his father, and doubtless helped him with his business. In 1582 (when not yet nineteen) he espoused Anne Hathaway, his senior by seven years. Their first child was born in May 1583. Up to the age of twenty-two Shakespeare lived in his father's house

with his wife, and two more, twin, children, were born to him. In the same year, 1585, he left Stratford, after the well-known poaching episode, but it may be questioned whether he at once sought an asylum in London. According to Sidney Lee, it seems possible that he was for a time schoolmaster in a neighbouring village, though it was not long before he drifted to London.[1]

On his arrival in London he had perforce to take up the first occupation that offered itself. At this date it was customary for men of fashion to resort to the theatre on horseback. Those who had no servant were obliged to entrust their mounts to some one during the performance. Shakespeare presumably fulfilled this office at the door of the theatre of James Burbage, near Smithfield, and acquitted himself so honourably that he obtained a great reputation in the business. His clients increased so much that he was obliged to take in help. These grooms were known as 'Shakespeare's boys,' and retained the name, after the departure of their first master, as long as the custom lasted of going on horseback to the theatre.[2] Shakespeare was doubtless noticed by Burbage, who gave him employment inside the theatre. Malone records a stage tradition that 'his first office in the theatre was that of prompter's attendant,' or call-boy. His promotion, in any case, was rapid, as it is certain that by 1593 Shakespeare was himself

[1] *Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 29.

Sidney Lee, however, remarks that this part of the story sounds apocryphal, *op. cit.* p. 33.

a professed actor. In the records of the Lord Chamberlain's company there is express mention of his name on the occasion of the two performances given at Christmas of this year before Queen Elizabeth. Still, it is probable that the great poet made his first appearance long before this at the Theatre and the Curtain, both playhouses situated in the parish of Shoreditch, some half-mile from the city walls. When, in 1592, the Lord Chamberlain's company (then known as Lord Strange's men) opened a second theatre—The Rose, in Southwark—Shakespeare was already recognised as actor and author. In 1594 he appeared on the stage of a theatre newly built at Newington Butts. Between 1595 and 1599 we find him again at the Theatre and the Curtain. It was at this time (in 1596) that he lost his only son Hamnet at Stratford, at the age of ten. After King James's succession, in May 1603, the Lord Chamberlain's company was promoted to be the King's players. There is documentary evidence that at this epoch Shakespeare was one of its leaders. His colleagues at that time were Richard Burbage (the director, and the greatest tragic actor of the day), John Heming, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips, who were all his best and lifelong friends. With the exception of *Titus Andronicus*, and the Third Part of *Henry VI.*, which was performed by other companies, Richard Burbage's troop gave the initial representations of all the plays of Shakespeare.

In 1599, the Theatre was demolished, and the Globe was constructed from its materials, and was

henceforth considered the best theatre of London; and here Shakespeare acted till 1609. In this same year he appeared with the other members of his company on the stage at Blackfriars. It can be shown that he took part in the first performance of *Sejanus*, by Ben Jonson, in 1603; but there our knowledge of his career as actor closes. It is supposed that during the few remaining years Shakespeare devoted himself entirely to his occupation of dramatic author, while keeping up his connection with the theatre, of which he was probably a shareholder.

In Shakespeare's time the companies of actors spent the whole of the summer outside London. Between 1594 and 1614 Burbage's players gave performances at Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Dover, and Oxford. The provinces thus had more than one opportunity of applauding the great poet-actor, but in what part we do not know. We have said that Shakespeare played in the *Sejanus* of Ben Jonson: his name also appears in the cast of Jonson's comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*. Rowe affirms that it was as 'the Ghost in his own *Hamlet*' that Shakespeare showed 'the top of his performance.' A younger brother of the poet, who often came to London to see him act in his own plays, recalled in old age his performance of Adam in *As You Like It*. Chettle wrote, in 1592, that Shakespeare was an 'excellent' actor.

Shakespeare did not finally return to his native town till 1612; but during the latter days of his stay in London he paid frequent visits to Stratford.

In June 1607 he was present at the marriage of his elder daughter Susanna with Mr. John Hall, a physician of that place. In 1612 the poet was able to realise the dream of his life, and retired to Stratford, to enjoy in that quiet retreat the little fortune amassed by his labours. He was then forty-eight. In 1616 his daughter Judith married a Stratford wine-merchant, Thomas Quiney. In the month of April of the same year he received a visit from his friend Ben Jonson, and shortly after his departure was taken with the malignant fever which carried him off after three days' illness, on April 23, 1616. He was buried in the church at Stratford. Shakespeare bequeathed all his property to his elder daughter Susanna (Mrs. Hall), with legacies to his younger daughter, Judith Quiney, to his sister, and to several actors, his former colleagues. His wife only received her legal portion. She died some years later (in 1623), being sixty-three years of age.

Gilbert, Shakespeare's brother, who was not mentioned in the poet's will, seems to have been living in 1660. The younger daughter, Judith Quiney, had three sons, one of whom died in infancy, the others soon after their arrival at manhood. His elder daughter, Susanna Hall, had one girl, who married firstly Mr. Thomas Nash, of Stratford (died 1647), and secondly, Sir John Barnard, a gentleman of wealth and position in the county of Northampton. Leaving no issue by either husband, the lineal descent from the poet terminated at her death, in the year 1670.[1]

[1] *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, Halliwell-Phillipps, p. 227.

2. Different Phases of the Poet's Dramatic Career

The literary career of Shakespeare may be divided into three very distinct phases.

The first, between 1586 and 1593, is a period of groping, an apprenticeship in which the poet levied contribution on the works of his predecessors, and revealed a marvellous talent of adaptation. From this period date *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Henry VI.* (*First Part*), *Titus Andronicus*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and doubtless *The Old Tragedy of Hamlet*, which were merely retouched by the poet.

The second phase is characterised by greater originality. The poet, conscious of his strength, delivers himself over to the elemental inspirations of his genius, thirsting for creative freedom, and the new plays are hardly in anything mechanical. To this second period, which extends from 1593 to 1599, belong *King John*, *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry VI.* (*Second Part*), *Henry VI.* (*Third Part*), *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Henry IV.* (*First Part*), *Henry IV.* (*Second Part*), *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry V.*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The third phase is essentially the period of reflection. The genius of Shakespeare attains its full maturity, and in form as well as thought exhibits a degree of absolute perfection. It was

between 1599 and 1612 that he composed *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, *Coriolanus*, *Troïlus and Cressida*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, *Henry VIII.*

3. Shakespeare's Plays and their Various Sources

First Phase, 1586 to 1593 :—

(1) *The Comedy of Errors.*—The celebrated dramatic critic Collier has fixed the date of the composition of this play in the year 1589. The subject seems to have been taken from the *History of Errors*, a play said to have been acted in 1577, and taken from the *Menaechmi* of Plautus.

(2) *Love's Labour's Lost.*—Another of Shakespeare's early comedies, doubtless composed before 1590. The sources of this play are unknown. In any case it must indirectly have been inspired by Italian Comedy.

(3) *Henry VI.* (*First Part*).—Played March 31, 1592, by Lord Strange's men at the Rose. Here Shakespeare merely retouched the work of an earlier author, and there are only two or three passages, such as the rose scene in the Temple Gardens and the speech of the dying Mortimer, which bear the imprint of his style.

(4) *Titus Andronicus.*—This tragedy was probably written before 1594. Sidney Lee suggests that Kyd may have collaborated in this work.[1] It

[1] *Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 65.

was inspired by a piece called *Titus and Vespasian*, played by Lord Strange's men, April 11, 1592. Shakespeare's tragedy was acted by the Earl of Sussex's men, January 23, 1594.

(5) *Two Gentlemen of Verona.*—The time at which this piece was written and acted is uncertain; it is however believed to date from the first period. It may have been suggested by Parabasco's Italian comedy, *Il Viluppo.*

Second Phase, 1593 to 1599:—

(1) *King John.*—The principal source of this drama, composed towards 1593, is *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, an anonymous work that appeared in 1591.

(2) *Richard II.*—This tragedy is also supposed to have been written about 1593, and to have been taken from the Historical Chronicles of Holinshed and Hall.

(3) *Richard III.*—Shakespeare composed this historical drama also towards 1593. The facts are taken from the *Chronicles of England, Scotlana, and Ireland*, published in 1577 by Holinshed, and possibly also from another historical work, *Union of the two noble illustrious Families of Lancaster and York*, by Hall, completed by Grafton.

(4) *Romeo and Juliet.*—Played for the first time at the Curtain in London, between July 1596 and April 1597, this tragedy was published in the latter year. For its composition Shakespeare found inspiration (i) in a poem by Arthur Brooke, *The Tragical History of Romeo and Juliet*, which ap-

peared in 1562; (ii) in the novels of the Italian Bandello, translated into French by Belleforest under the title *Histoires Tragiques*, and from French into English by Paynter in the *Palace of Pleasure*. Shakespeare also drew upon *The History of Mariotto and Giannozza*, by the Italian novelist Massuccio, the heir to Boccaccio's style. The passage referring to the use of the sleeping potion to produce 'a cold and drowsy humour' was taken from this book.

(5) *Henry VI.* (*Second Part*).—This play is only an adaptation by Shakespeare of a drama, by an unknown author, which appeared in 1594 under the title of *The First Part of Contention between the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*. It is thought to have been performed in 1595.

(6) *Henry VI.* (*Third Part*).—In this, as in the preceding tragedy, Shakespeare had only the rôle of corrector. This third part is certainly a variant of the piece, *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York*, the work of an anonymous writer which appeared in 1595. The third part of *Henry VI.* was probably played in the following year, but this is mere conjecture.

(7) *All's Well That Ends Well.*—Shakespeare took the title of this play from Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, the original source again being the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio. Judging from probabilities, the play was written in 1595.

(8) *Henry IV.* (*First Part*). (9) *Henry IV.* (*Second Part*).—These two tragedies were composed about 1597. Shakespeare took his subject

from the Historical Chronicles of Holinshed. The two plays were probably acted before Queen Elizabeth in the Christmas holidays, 1597-98.

(10) *The Merry Wives of Windsor.*—This comedy is believed to have been written, at Queen Elizabeth's wish, between the two dramas of *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.*, that is, in 1599. The subject must have been taken from the English romance, *Newes out of Purgatorie*, by Tarlton, itself inspired by one of Straparola's *Notte piacevoli.* Not only the incidents, but even the expressions, are identical.

(11) *Henry V.*—This tragedy is in direct connection with the two previous dramas, and comes from the same sources. It was composed about 1599.

(12) *The Merchant of Venice.*—Shakespeare took the subject of this play from *Il Pecorone*, a collection of Italian tales by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, a work printed in Italian, 1558. Shylock was moreover suggested by Barabas, in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta.* The *Merchant of Venice* was published in 1600.

(13) *Much Ado about Nothing.*—The plot of this comedy, written in 1598, is borrowed from Bandello, who drew his own inspiration from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso.*

(14) *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*—This play was printed in 1600. Its various parts had various sources: (i) The story of the magic potion may have been found in the *Diana* of Montemayor. (ii) The entire machinery of Oberon and his Fairy Court was in all probability taken by Shakespeare

from Greene's *Scottish History of James IV.* (1590). The idea of Oberon, King of the Fairies, is for the rest of French extraction, from the old popular romance, *Huon de Bordeaux*, translated into English by Lord Berners, in 1579. (iii) The story of Pyramus and Thisbe was probably derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, done into English by Golding, 1567. (iv) The well-known passage, 'the little western flower,' Scene 2, Act ii., is no doubt an allusion to the unhappy passion of Leicester for Queen Elizabeth.

(15) *The Taming of the Shrew.*—The notion of this comedy was borrowed from an earlier play, printed in 1594, *A Pleasant Conceited Historie called the Taming of a Shrew.* The original sources of the two plays are: (i) a French work, Goulart's *Trésor d'histoires admirables et merveilleuses de notre temps.* This author certainly derived his story from the *De rebus burgundicis* of Heuterus. Some critics, indeed, trace it back to the Arabian Nights. (ii) The principal action of the comedy was suggested to Shakespeare by the *Notte piacevoli* of Straparola, published in Venice 1550, and by two early Spanish romances, taken from *El Conde Lucanor*, by Don Juan Manuel, published 1643. (iii) The episode of Bianca and Lucentio is taken directly from the fourth and fifth acts of Ariosto's *Gli Suppositi*, translated by Gascoigne as *The Supposes.*

THIRD PHASE, 1599 to 1612:—

(1) *As You Like It.*—Written towards 1599 or

1600, this comedy is an adaptation of Lodge's romance, *Rosalynde, Euphues' Golden Legacie* (1590). The scene of Orlando's encounter with Charles the Wrestler was inspired by Saviolo's *Practise*, a manual of the art of self-defence, which appeared in 1595, from the pen of Vincentio Saviolo, an Italian fencing-master in the service of the Earl of Essex. This comedy bears a strong resemblance to a pastoral drama.

(2) *Twelfth Night.*—This comedy also was most likely composed in 1600. It was acted at the Middle Temple Hall, February 2, 1601. Shakespeare found the subject in the *Historie of Apollonius and Silla*, which is in Barnabe Riche's *Farewell to Militarie Profession* (1581). The author of this work himself drew on Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*, the French translation of Bandello's novels.

(3) *Hamlet.*—This tragedy was represented at the Globe Theatre in London, in the spring of 1602, by the Lord Chamberlain's company. The part of Hamlet was taken by the celebrated Burbage, who made it his most remarkable creation. Shakespeare himself played the Ghost.

In June 1594 the Lord Chamberlain's company (doubtless including Shakespeare) had acted an anonymous 'tragedy of *Hamlet*' at the theatre of Newington Butts. This play, as touched up by Shakespeare, was certainly performed in 1602, but the tragedy as we know it would seem to be a second version, given by Shakespeare in 1603. The early play of Hamlet has been attributed by

some to Thomas Kyd. His *Spanish Tragedy* recalls the 'tragedy of *Hamlet*' in many particulars. Be this as it may, the anonymous author has taken his play from an English work, *The History of Hamlet*, which is again a version of the *Histoires Tragiques* of Belleforest. This last author found his subject in the *Historica Danica* of Saxo-Grammaticus, who lived in Denmark at the end of the twelfth century.

(4) *Julius Caesar.*—To judge from probabilities, this tragedy was acted in 1603. The subject was taken from North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* of Caesar, Brutus, and Antonius.

(5) *Othello.*—This play is mentioned for the first time on the occasion of its performance on November 1 of that year, by the King's players, Shakespeare himself included, before James I. at Whitehall. *Othello* was inspired by Cinthio's Italian novels, the *Hecatommithi*, of which a translation into French had been made by Chappuys, in 1584.

(6) *Measure for Measure.*—This play was written in the same year as *Othello*, in 1604, and was performed on December 26 before James I. at Whitehall. As in the preceding work, Shakespeare was inspired by Cinthio's *Hecatommithi.*

(7) *King Lear.*—The tragedy of King Lear, played for the first time on December 26, 1606, achieved a considerable success. This story was founded on *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters.* The author of this last work took his subject from the chronicles of

Holinshed, who again followed the chronicles of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and he no doubt took the story from an ancient Gallic chronicle of the seventh century, the work of Bishop Tyrsilios, or perhaps from the *Gesta Romanorum.*

(8) *Antony and Cleopatra.*—This play was acted at the Globe in 1608, that is, in the same year as *Pericles*, but with much less success. Here again the idea was taken from North's Plutarch's *Lives.* Dryden made an adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra*, under the title of *All for Love.*

(9) *Timon of Athens.*—Undoubtedly an old play worked up by Shakespeare, and founded on the novel, *Of the strange and beastly nature of Timon of Athens, enemy to mankind, with his death, burial and epitaph*, in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, published 1566. The author of the original tragedy derived his inspiration from the *Dialogues* of Lucian.

(10) *Pericles.*—Played at the Globe in 1608. The subject was taken from Laurence Twine's *Patterne of Painefull Adventures*, 1607. Twine himself only reprinted the story of *Apollonius of Tyre*, a very popular subject in the Middle Ages, taken originally from the *Gesta Romanorum.* Certain modern critics pretend that Shakespeare merely worked up an old play by George Wilkins, called *The Miseries of Inforst Marriage*, a piece which has much in common with Shakespeare's play.

(11) *Coriolanus.*—This tragedy, composed towards 1610, was taken directly from North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives.*

(12) *Troïlus and Cressida.*—Represented for the first time in 1609. Shakespeare took this play from a volume called *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye, translated and drawen out of frenshe into englishe by W. Caxton*, 1471. This work, again, was a translation of the *Recueil des Histoires de Troyes*, by the French writer, Raoul le Fèvre, which appeared in 1463 or 1464. The loves of Troïlus and Cressida were taken by Shakespeare from the *Tales* of Chaucer. Dryden gave a version of this play, under the title *Truth Found Too Late.*

(13) *The Winter's Tale.*—This play was performed at the Globe, May 15, 1611. Greene's romance, *Pandosto, the Triumph of Time*, appeared in 1588, and doubtless provided Shakespeare with his subject.

(14) *The Tempest.* — Given at Whitehall on November 1, 1611, before James I., and later on at the Blackfriars Theatre. This tragedy was probably suggested to Shakespeare by the German play, the *Comedia von der schönen Sidea*, by Jacob Ayrer, which appeared in 1604. This play might have been described to Shakespeare by the English actors on their return from Germany, whither they had gone to see this piece. There are in *The Tempest* certain peculiarities which recall the *Orlando Furioso* as translated by Harrington in 1591. Many passages in Shakespeare's drama resemble the *Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Isle of Divils*, published in 1610 by Silvester Jourdan. The expedition was or-

ganised in 1608 by the Earls of Southampton and Pembroke. Other passages were doubtless inspired by the perusal of a work by Thomas Strachey, secretary to the Council of Virginia, entitled *A True Repertory of the wracke and redemption of Sir Th. Gates, Knight, upon, and from the Islands of the Bermudas.* This work appeared in 1612. Shakespeare's drama suggested to Beaumont and Fletcher the idea of their play, *The Sea-Voyage.*

(15) *Macbeth.*—Played at the Globe in 1611. Shakespeare took this plot from the *Chronicles* of Holinshed, who found the story of Macbeth in the Latin work, *Scotorum Historiae,* of Hector Boece, translated into English by Bellenden, 1526. Shakespeare's play was reviewed and enlarged by D'Avenant in 1674. Schiller gave another version of it in 1804.

(16) *Cymbeline.*—This play was acted in 1610 or 1611. The names of Cymbeline and his two sons, as well as some of the historical events in which the King takes part, were derived from Holinshed, and indirectly from Geoffrey of Monmouth. Shakespeare was further inspired by Boccaccio's *Decamerone* (in particular by the ninth tale of the second day), for the history of Ginevra, which provided him with several situations, including the story of Imogen.

(17) *Henry VIII.*—The majority of English critics affirm that Fletcher collaborated in this tragedy, which was performed in 1613. *Henry VIII.* is founded on the *Chronicles* of Holinshed

and Hall. The episode relating to Cranmer appears to have been taken from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, written in 1563.

4. Plays attributed, wholly or in part, to Shakespeare

Arden of Feversham (printed 1592).—This play is the dramatic version of a horrible story narrated by Holinshed in the *Chronicles*, which tells of the murder of a Kentish gentleman of the name of Arden by his wife, her paramour, and some ruffians. The general opinion is that Shakespeare merely touched up the play.

The Raigne of King Edward III. (printed 1596).—The two first acts of this play were inspired by Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. The last three are taken from Holinshed and Froissart. The great defect of the play is the absence of harmony in its different parts, from which several critics have concluded that Shakespeare had no hand in its composition. Yet we can hardly doubt that the two first acts were his original work, for it is difficult to doubt the authenticity of the admirable passages they contain.

A Yorkshire Tragedy (played at the Globe in 1608).—This is the dramatisation of a horrible tale of murder committed in 1604, and related at length in Stow's *Chronicles*. The play may have been written by Thomas Heywood. Shakespeare, no doubt, contented himself with the alteration of some few passages when he produced the play at his own theatre, the Globe.

The Two Noble Kinsmen (printed 1634).—This play, written almost entirely by Fletcher, is the adaptation of an old tragedy, *Palamon and Arcyte*, which appeared in 1594, and contained some touches by the hand of Shakespeare, which were respected by Fletcher.

5. Interpretations of Shakespeare's Plays in England, between 1660 and 1900, by the most celebrated English and American Actors.

The enforced closing of the theatres during the civil wars, and under Cromwell's protectorate, brought oblivion on the Shakespearean Drama during a period of fifteen years. After the Restoration, from 1660, his plays were reproduced upon the stage; and Pepys tells us that, between October 11, 1660, and February 6, 1669, he was present at representations of a dozen plays of Shakespeare. Between 1670 and 1692 several dramatists unhappily bethought them of making adaptations of some of the plays of the great poet, Dryden and Thomas Otway being among the Vandals. Throughout that period, however, the eminent tragedian, Thomas Betterton, maintained the popularity of the original conceptions of Shakespeare.

During the second part of the eighteenth century the principal interpreters of the Shakespearean Drama were Charles Macklin and Robert Wilks. Between 1741 and 1779 the incomparable acting of Garrick (who never had an equal in Shakespearean repertory) gave an unheard-of popularity

to the plays, more particularly to *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. The great actor was ably seconded, moreover, in his task by the famous Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard.

Owing to the genius of John Philip Kemble and his greater sister, Mrs. Siddons (both brought up in the school of Garrick), the plays of Shakespeare obtained a considerable vogue between 1783 and 1816. It was, moreover, in this period that another famous actress, Mrs. Davenport, began her brilliant illustrations of the Shakespearean Drama.

Shakespeare's popularity at the theatre increased still more during the reign of Edmund Kean, who between 1814 and 1833 gave triumphant renderings of *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Richard III.*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King John*, *King Henry IV.*, *King Lear*, *King Henry V.*, *Coriolanus*.

The period between 1836 and 1851 marked another brilliant phase of the Shakespearean Drama in the nineteenth century, for it was then that Macready undertook, not merely to illustrate the plays with his remarkable genius, but also to purge them from the alterations and interpolations introduced by various actors and actresses since the Restoration. Accordingly he gave striking revivals of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Coriolanus*, *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Henry IV.*, *Henry V.*, *King Lear*, *As You Like It*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *King John*, *Richard III.*, *The Merchant of Venice*.

Between 1851 and 1859 another actor of genius, Charles Kean, a rival of Macready, gave sensational renderings of *Twelfth Night*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *King John*, *Macbeth*, *King Richard III.*, *Henry VIII.*, *Richard II.*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry V.*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*. From this period, too, date the first successes in London of Miss Helen Faucit, the great tragic actress.

The year 1827 occupied an important place in the annals of the London stage, for it witnessed the first essays of an American actor in the Shakespearean repertory. This was James Hackett, who interpreted the part of *Richard III.* with great talent, and some years later made the same success with Falstaff in *Henry IV.*, finally establishing his reputation as a great comedian in the Falstaff of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Another American actor, Edwin Forrest, encouraged by the success of his compatriot, ventured into Shakespearean Tragedy, and won his laurels as Richard, Othello, and Hamlet. Unhappily, his jealousy and ill-feeling towards Macready damaged his reputation.

From 1850 there was an outburst of Puritanism, which relegated the plays of Shakespeare, as an illicit pleasure, to the suburban theatre of Sadler's Wells. This little Islington playhouse became, between 1844 and 1862, under the actor-manager Phelps, the authorised sanctuary of Elizabethan Drama, as well as a school for actors. The most sensational revivals of Phelps were *Antony and*

Cleopatra in 1849 (this play had not been acted for two centuries), and *Love's Labour's Lost* in 1857. Phelps's management of the theatre at Sadler's Wells came to an end in 1862, and in his farewell discourse the worthy actor stated that the aim of his life had been to reproduce the entire repertory of Shakespeare. He had actually mounted thirty-two of the plays of the great poet, and had devoted some 3500 evenings to their performance at Sadler's Wells. Meantime, some remarkable performances of Helen Faucit (now the wife of Sir Theodore Martin) had brought back to the fashionable stage of London *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *As You Like It*.

To the Americans, however, belongs the great merit of having preserved the vitality of the Shakespearean Drama, when to all appearance, between 1850 and 1875, it was erased from the polite stages of the capital. Miss Charlotte Cushman, whose voice, manners, walk, and even profile curiously recalled the personality of Macready, was admirably aided by her masculine temperament in playing *Romeo*, and thus in 1855 she secured a temporary triumph for this play. Her compatriots—MacKean, Buchanan, James Murdoch, J. B. Roberts, Edwin Booth, and the young Batemans—gave revivals on the stage, between 1855 and 1875, of *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Richard III.*, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*.

Special mention must also be made of the American Colonel Bateman, who was manager of

the Lyceum between 1871 and 1878. To this clever manager London owes the reproduction of Shakespeare's finest works, while a still greater claim to our gratitude lies in the fact that he discovered and launched the famous tragedian, Sir Henry Irving. Another foreign actor, a Frenchman, Fechter, who was popular for a long time in Paris, in *La Dame aux Camélias* of Alexandre Dumas, contributed no less to the revival of Shakespeare in London. Notwithstanding his foreign accent, he succeeded in *Macbeth*, in *Othello*, and still more in *Hamlet*, at the Princess and the Lyceum. Yet, notwithstanding these flashes of popularity, the Romantic Drama was practically bankrupt, and it is Henry Irving who claims the signal honour of having, in 1874, achieved the final resurrection of Shakespearean Tragedy. On October 31 of that year he appeared for the first time as Hamlet, with such success that the house was filled for two hundred consecutive nights. The popularity of the great actor has gone on increasing ever since. After winning applause in *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Richard III.*, he undertook the management (in 1878) of the Lyceum Theatre, and, in addition to the foregoing, revived with success *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Henry VIII.*, a tragedy in which he made his greatest success as Cardinal Wolsey. Betweenwhiles the great American actor, Edwin Booth, excited the admiration of London, in 1880, by his fine interpretations of *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and

Othello. The night of May 31, 1881, was famous in the annals of the English stage, for Sir Henry Irving generously came forward as Iago, alongside of the other's Othello. Miss Genevieve Ward, a compatriot of Booth, achieved some considerable success in the part of Lady Macbeth, which she acted frequently after 1873. Lastly, since 1888, Ada Rehan and the Daly Company have given successful performances of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *As You Like It.*

Along with Sir Henry Irving and the distinguished artist Miss Ellen Terry, England possesses other actors of great merit (Forbes-Robertson, Beerbohm-Tree, Wilson-Barrett, as well as Benson and his company), who have earned applause in all the principal plays of Shakespeare, and still contribute to the popularity of the Romantic Drama on the boards of the London theatres.

6. Shakespeare in France

Early translations — Eighteenth century — Shakespearean Drama on the principal Parisian stages—Nineteenth century, 1829 to 1884; 1884 to 1900—English actors and the Shakespearean repertory in Paris: in 1822; in 1827 and 1828; in 1844 and 1845; in 1867—Shakespeare criticised by Coleridge and by Saint-Marc-Girardin and Charles Nodier.

Cyrano de Bergerac (died 1655) was the first writer who studied the works of Shakespeare; it has even been suggested that he was inspired by *Cymbeline*, *Hamlet*, and *The Merchant of Venice* in the composition of his tragedy *Agrippine.* In the following century the Abbé Prévost (died 1769) confessed in his review, *Le Pour et le*

Contre, that the works of Shakespeare were not wanting in power. But it was Voltaire who first made any profound study of the great poet, after his visit to England, between 1726 and 1729. He expressed his admiration for Shakespeare's genius, even while he condemned his want of taste and of artistic sense. He described him as 'the Corneille of London, a great fool, but with superb moments.' Voltaire was inspired by the works of Shakespeare in some of his plays. His tragedy of *Brutus* contains many reminiscences of *Julius Caesar*. His *Eryphile* (1732) was suggested by *Hamlet*; *Zaïre* is essentially an echo of *Othello*.

At the end of the eighteenth century Ducis gave to the French stage, under the name of translation, the tragedies of *Hamlet*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, abbreviated according to the classical 'rules,' and in reality no more than gross perversions of the original plays. *Hamlet* was acted in 1769 with great success, and *Othello*, played in 1792 at the Comédie-Française, was received with enthusiasm.

Between 1776 and 1782 Pierre Letourneur gave himself up entirely to the prose translation of Shakespeare's works, a task in which he acquitted himself somewhat badly. Nevertheless, he ventured to assert that 'Shakespeare was the god of the theatre,' an utterance which called forth indignant protests from Voltaire.

During the first part of the nineteenth century Guizot, Villemain, and Barante made an active propaganda in favour of the great English poet,

whose genius and incomparable powers they proclaimed.

There were also some happy attempts at translation, including those of M. Francisque Michel, in 1839. But the most remarkable are those of M. François Victor Hugo, the son of the great poet, who translated Shakespeare's plays between 1859 and 1866. *Shakespeare, ses œuvres, et ses critiques*, by M. Alfred Mézières, is also a most interesting study.

During the last century several of Shakespeare's plays were specially translated or adapted for some of the great Parisian theatres. The first adaptation was that of *Othello*, by Alfred de Vigny, who, on October 24, 1829, presented at the Comédie-Française a version of the English tragedy, modified to the exigencies of the classic 'rules,' the success of which was considerable. MM. Paul Meurice and Alexandre Dumas also arranged a *Hamlet*, but unfortunately they entirely altered the ending. This play was given for the first time in 1847, at the historic theatre of Alexandre Dumas.

The great novelist, George Sand, gave to the Comédie-Française in 1856 a translation of *As You Like It*, which was favourably received. In 1863 an excellent translation in verse of *Macbeth* was made by M. Lacroix, and performed successfully at the Odéon. The same theatre produced, in the month of April 1882, an *Othello* translated by M. Louis de Gramont, which is not devoid of value. On May 21, 1884 the Porte Saint-Martin gave the first and highly sensational representation

of *Macbeth*, translated by the poet Richepin, in which Mme. Sarah Bernhardt received much applause in the part of Lady Macbeth.

In the same year M. Lacroix's *Macbeth* was revived at the Odéon. In 1886 the *Hamlet* of MM. Paul Meurice and Alexandre Dumas was included in the repertory of the Comédie-Française, and the part of Hamlet was colossally rendered by M. Mounet-Sully, who made it one of his finest creations. The success of this fine tragedy has gone on increasing, until now it is one of the plays most appreciated by the frequenters of these superb performances.

In 1886, too, a new adaptation of *Hamlet* was brought out by MM. Cressonnois and C. Samson, and acted at the Porte Saint-Martin theatre. Mme. Sarah Bernhardt took the part of Ophelia.

In December 1889 the Odéon gave, under the title of *Shylock*, an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*, by M. Haraucourt.

The Comédie-Française, for the first time on November 19, 1891, gave a performance of *La Mégère apprivoisée* (*The Taming of the Shrew*), an adaptation in verse by M. Delair, of which the success was and is enormous. The great French theatre produced in the same year *Beaucoup de bruit pour rien* (*Much Ado about Nothing*), translated by M. Legendre.

On December 10, 1898 *Mesure pour Mesure* (*Measure for Measure*) was played at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre. In this performance the scenery and staging were according to the directions given by

the Elizabethan Stage Society in London, which religiously follows the Shakespearean tradition.

A new adaptation of *Othello* has recently been given by the poet Jean Aicard, and played with success at the Comédie-Française in the month of March 1899. The interpretation of the principal part is again one of the finest creations of Mounet-Sully.

Between May 25 and 31, 1899, six performances of another *Othello*, this time an integral and literal translation by M. Louis Ménard, were given at the Théâtre Libre.

In conclusion, the climax of the Shakespearean repertory in Paris was (in 1899) the representation at the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt of *La Tragique Histoire d'Hamlet, Prince de Danemark.*[1] The great tragedian reserved for herself the part of the young prince, and this original and happy creation is perhaps the most sensational dramatic event of her long theatrical career.

During the nineteenth century Shakespeare's plays were performed at different periods in Paris, in the original text, by English companies. The first series of these performances took place in the months of July and August, at the theatre of the Porte Saint-Martin. This experience was unfortunate. The actors were received with cries of 'Parlez français!' and by apostrophes such as 'À bas Shakespeare! C'est un des aides de camps de Wellington.'

In September 1827 Kemble and a brilliant

[1] French version, by MM. Eugène Morand and Marcel Schwob.

company of actors (Abbott's company), which included the beautiful Miss Smithson, acted *Hamlet*. This performance excited the enthusiasm of Victor Hugo, as well as of Alexandre Dumas, and decided the future of the Romantic Drama in France.

On October 4 of the same year Abbott's company gave a series of performances in the Salle Favart, where Miss Smithson won great applause by her remarkable interpretations of Portia, Cordelia, Ophelia, and Desdemona. Charles x. and the Duchesse de Berry assisted at the last performance. The same company acted at Rouen, at Havre, at Orleans, and at Bordeaux. In the next year, 1828, the tragedian Macready played for the first time in France, at the Théâtre Italien, where in the month of April he gave a series of performances before the Duc d'Orléans and the Duchesse de Berry. *Macbeth*, for Miss Smithson as well as for Macready, was the occasion of an unprecedented success. The French public surnamed Macready the 'Talma of England.' Kean appeared in the following May on the stage of the Théâtre Italien. He took the parts of *Richard I.* and of *Shylock*, but with only moderate success. Macready returned in June of the same year, and appeared for two consecutive months in the Shakespearean plays, arousing greater enthusiasm every day from his audience. At the last performance of *Othello* they carried him off in triumph.

In 1844 Macready returned, accompanied by Miss Helen Faucit. The two great actors appeared on the stage of the Salle Ventadour and

interpreted *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Romeo and Juliet* with renewed success. Édouard Thierry the critic, in the literary journal called *Le Messager*, thus sums up the impression produced in Paris by this visit: 'The English artists have retained the tragic emphasis, as played by Lafond, as declaimed in the traditions of Talma. Macready himself at times preserves this pompous delivery, which he accentuates moreover in the English fashion, emphasising every syllable. Miss Faucit speaks simply, naturally; the phrases flow limpidly from her lips, and escape by a single utterance, as in our French recitation.' In 1845 Macready interpreted the part of Hamlet before King Louis-Philippe. In 1867 Sothern and an excellent company, which included the young Henry Irving, went over to Paris to give some performances of Shakespearean Drama, but the attempt was a failure, and has not since been renewed.

Although we have made it a rule not to trespass on the province of criticism proper, we cannot conclude this chapter on Shakespeare without giving some general appreciation of his works, and feel that we cannot err in following the lines of the great poet Coleridge, who, better perhaps than any other, has seized on the thought of the great genius.

'The characteristic of Shakespeare's genius,' says Coleridge, 'is that he keeps readers and spectators in a state of constant expectation, which replaces the vulgar sentiment of surprise that is usually evoked under similar conditions. Shakespeare,

instead of minutely analysing (like so many other dramatic writers) the passions and beliefs of man, has simply assured himself that such and such passions, such and such thoughts, have their *point de départ* in the habitual state of human nature, and not in the mere accidents of ignorance, or in any dissimilarity of temperament. If Shakespeare can be reproached with certain crudities of language, we must admit that he redeems these incorrections by an absolute conformity with the rules of upright conduct. He never glosses over things condemned by religion and reason, and with him our sensibilities are painfully affected in every case where they ought by the principles of moral law to be so influenced.' Along with Coleridge's verdict we may place that of the eminent French critic Saint-Marc-Girardin, who sums up his impressions of Shakespeare in these few lines: 'If Shakespeare is for all times, and within the reach of every man, it is because he is fundamentally human, true, and national; it is because his greatness defies all comparison; it is because his works contain pabulum for every mind and for every age, and are suited to charm the light hearts of the young as well as ripe and contemplative minds; it is because they afford matter for amusement as well as for reflection, and with all this, are English to the backbone.'

We will close with some other lines detached from the *Pensées de Shakespeare, extraites de ses ouvrages*, by Charles Nodier. In the preliminary observations to this work, printed at Besançon in

1801, we find the following reflections: 'Shakespeare is a friend whom Heaven has given to the unhappy in all times and in all countries. The critic may glance askance at his productions, where they seem to err in regularity of form and in exact symmetry; but his department has its limits, and only sensibility may legitimately judge genius. We may say of him, as was said of Richardson, "From Shakespeare's works we may take many maxims; but from all the works of the philosophers one could not make one page of Shakespeare." I recommend those who do not know him to read him for themselves. To those who know him, I recommend a second reading.'

'Genius cannot be expressed in an extract. I know this, but I wished to communicate my admiration for Shakespeare. I questioned my powers, and am content to cast a flower on his tomb, being unworthy to raise a monument to his memory.'[1]

[1] Neither in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, nor in that of the Arsenal (of which Charles Nodier was the director), is there any copy of this volume. Nor can it be traced in the British Museum. Mr. Sidney Lee, the editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, to whom I owe these lines, appears to be the unique possessor of this precious book—which, however, is inscribed in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

7. The Elizabethan Drama and the English Stage

The Theatre, the Curtain, and the early Tragedies—Performances in the time of Shakespeare—Playhouses in 1595—Newington Butts and Marlowe's tragedies—The Globe between 1593 and 1613: interior of the theatre—Different London theatres at the close of Elizabeth's reign: various idiosyncrasies—Staging—Costumes—Prices of admission—Theatrical libraries—Dramatic authors and theatrical managers—Adults in the principal female characters—Choristers as actors down to 1626, Shakespeare's company excepted—Dramatic companies in the reign of Elizabeth—Actors and the fashionable world of London—The public and the performances.

The establishment of permanent theatres in England, as well as official representations of the National Drama, dates from the year 1576. The actors, in order to avoid the supervision of the Lord Mayor and the City, constructed playhouses outside the territory over which the jurisdiction of the latter extended, that is, in the quarters of Shoreditch, of Blackfriars, and of Bankside, and these different stages were called the Theatre, the Curtain, and the Blackfriars Theatre. Halliwell-Phillipps gives some interesting details as to the Theatre and the Curtain, the history of these two being more particularly bound up with the personality of Shakespeare, in his double character of actor and dramatist. At that time the Theatre was 'in the fieldes,' and several meadows had to be crossed in order to reach it from London. In the spring of 1597 the lease of twenty-one years granted to Burbage by Giles Allen for the estate on which stood the Theatre at Shoreditch came to an end. The owner refusing to allow the exten-

sion of ten years, as originally covenanted for, the Burbages determined to transport the materials of their theatre to Southwark, where it was rebuilt and opened to the public as the celebrated Globe Theatre, early in 1600.[1]

The most interesting play performed on the stage of the old Theatre at Shoreditch had been *The Play of Plays*, an old Moral written in defence of the Drama, and acted in February 1581. The 'old *Hamlet*' was also represented there, along with Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.

The Curtain was situated in the same locality, and it was doubtless there that Ben Jonson made his entry as actor. It is almost certain that Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was acted at this theatre at the close of 1596, or early in 1597. The Curtain had a very bad reputation. All kinds of pieces were performed there, especially second-rate ones. *The Comedy of Errors* and Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* were, however, in all probability produced at the Curtain.

In Shakespeare's time the performances probably took place in the afternoon. The entrance to two of the theatres was only one penny: this, however, merely gave right of entrance to the pit, where every one had to stand. To get into the galleries cost another penny, and a comfortable

[1] According to Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines*, pp. 152 and 393 ff.; and Sidney Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 37.

Collier, however, *English Dramatic Poetry*, iii. p. 109 ff., ignores this account, and gives 1593 as the date at which the Globe was erected, stating on p. 85 that the Theatre simply fell into disuse after 1590. See also p. 277 of the present work.—TRANSLATOR.

seat required the outlay of a third. In these two theatres only the stage and the galleries were roofed over. At the Curtain the pit was certainly open to the weather, and such is supposed to have been the case at the Theatre also.

According to M. Bapst, it is to the German critics that we owe some other very interesting details about the English theatres at the end of the sixteenth century. A priest of Sainte-Marie d'Utrecht, Jean de Witt, a celebrated German traveller, who died at Rome in 1622, left a very curious account of the London playhouses in 1595. 'There were then in England,' he says, 'four theatres of a rare beauty, which gave different performances every day. Of these the most remarkable is the Rose, built in 1591; next to it comes the Swan. Both are situated on the right bank of the Thames, that is in the country, in the midst of marshes, where there are few houses. The two others are on the road which passes the Bishop's Gate. They are more ancient than those of the right bank, and date from 1576 and 1577' (doubtless the Curtain and the Blackfriars theatres). 'Lastly, on the right bank, near the Swan, is the Bear-Garden, where frequent fights take place with bears and other animals.'

The very detailed account of the Swan describes it as 'octagonal in shape, built of stone, while the others are wooden. The interior is open to the air, and circular, while all round the wall there are tiers of benches, as in the ancient theatre. The stage is raised four feet from the ground, and

divided from the pit by a balustrade. At the back two large pillars support a balcony, which can be used as a back stage, to represent a theatre within a theatre, as in *Hamlet*; a bedroom, as for Desdemona, in *Othello*; and a real balcony for *Romeo and Juliet*. A curtain that can be drawn at will divides, as required, the front scene from the back scene, concealing it from the spectators in the playhouse. Behind the back scene is a door by which the actors enter and leave; this door gives access by a stair to the room where the actors dress in the upper story. A square roof protects the stage from rain; another very narrow circular roof, starting from the walls, covers the galleries or amphitheatres, which lean against it. These two roofs are made of thatch, or rushes, which abound on the banks of the Thames. The room in which the actors dress is lofty enough to dominate the entire ring, like the spire of a church; from its windows there is an extensive view over the city and country. Here stand the trumpeters, whose notes sound forth the beginning of the play. A great banner, too, is run up as the signal of the opening of the piece. The Swan is able to contain three thousand spectators.'

Newington Butts was the name of a house constructed for the service of archers and pleasure-makers. In this hall were given the two tragedies of Marlowe, *Tamburlaine* (in 1587) and *The Jew of Malta* (in 1588); as well as subsequently *The Taming of the Shrew*, and the 'old tragedy of *Hamlet*.'

In 1593 Richard Burbage, the leader of the Lord Chamberlain's company, to which Shakespeare belonged, built the Globe Theatre on the right bank of the Thames, opposite the Tower. 'This theatre, the most fashionable at the end of the sixteenth century, was wholly of wood, painted red to imitate brick, and covered with a thatched roof, which covered the stage and projected forwards. The playhouse was open to the weather; it was a court in which stood the spectators, and surrounded by compartments or boxes. The Globe (the scene of Shakespeare's exploits) was the summer theatre, and used only for four or five months; for, as the hall was open, evening performances were necessarily excluded. The winter plays took place at Blackfriars.'

According to Hentzner, another famous German traveller, who came to London in 1600, 'the collection of theatres agglomerated on the right bank looked in summer like a suburban fair. The Globe, the Swan, the Bear-Garden, and the Rose were resorted to by water, in preference to the long *détour* by the bridge. The Fortune in Golding Lane, which was also a first-class theatre, was built in 1599 by Henslowe and Alleyn, the leaders of the Lord Admiral's players, the rival company. In the pit of the Globe, where Shakespeare was manager, there was an immense stoup of thick English ale, from which every man could draw at will. The women in the boxes wore the traditional velvet mask to hide their face, and smoked pipes during the performance. The boxes

contained stools, while there were no seats in the pit. The elegants brought their own stools, and sat not only at the side of the stage, but even behind the actors.'[1]

In 1613 the Globe was burned down, and reconstructed in the following year. This time the wood was replaced by plaster, and the thatch by slates. The stage was made of oak-beams, and there was a 'tiring-room behind, with windows, for the actors to rest in. Instead of a single row, there were three sets of boxes, superposed, surrounding the court, and holding the ordinary spectators. The whole building cost £880. In addition to the theatres on the right bank of the Thames, which was always the real dramatic quarter, there were by the end of Elizabeth's reign several theatres within the city: the Cock-Pit or Phoenix at Drury Lane; the Red Bull in St. John Street; the Fortune, Shakespeare's rival, between Whitecross Street and Golding Lane in St. Giles', Cripplegate. Out of the eleven theatres existing in London at the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, two, the Globe and the Fortune, were served by the two great companies (of the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Admiral) which were directly under the King's patronage, as well as by several smaller companies, whose different members dispersed themselves also in the other theatres. Of these theatres some were called public, others private. The private theatres, that is to say the Cock-Pit, the Salisbury Court, the Blackfriars Theatre, were, unlike the others, entirely

[1] *Essai sur l'Histoire du Théâtre.* Germain Bapst.

roofed in, and could thus be used in winter. The stage was then illuminated with candles. These private theatres were smaller than the others, and the company was more select. The Globe, the Fortune, and the Red Bull were public, and as the house was open to weather, the theatrical season, on account of the fogs, lasted only for two or three months; this, at any rate, was the case for the Globe. The use of torches was of course unknown. In these theatres, in winter as in summer, the performance took place in the middle of the day, in general from three to five o'clock. The theatres had each their own sign. Before the Fortune stood the statue of Dame Fortune. The sign of the Globe was a Hercules upholding the world. Boards were used to expound the action and title of the play. Those for tragedies were printed in large red letters.

Seen from a distance, these theatres looked like enormous towers, out-topping the trees and houses that surrounded them.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, properties (like those of the French stage) were used to represent woods, buildings, and furniture. The hangings were mere rags, hung up by rings, on which were rudely painted landscapes, or some city in perspective. Following the ancient use of the Greek theatres, the back of the stage was hung with black drapery when a tragedy was to be performed.

It was not only on the stages of the theatres that stage-furniture was wanting; the same was true

of the Court when Masks were performed there. On the other hand, the costumes of the actors were rich, worth in some instances £20. The absence of perspective and of staging obliged the spectators to seek compensation in beauty of costume and charm of diction.

The prices of admission varied according to the importance of the theatre, the play, and its degree of longevity. In the public theatres the people stood in the court upon an entrance payment of threepence. In the private theatres there were benches for the people. The more affluent occupied boxes. Finally, persons of quality took their stools on to the stage, and sometimes established themselves there by main force. From this vantage-ground they criticised the actors loudly, smoking their pipes, and throwing orange-peel on to the spectators in the pit. Speaking generally, the prices ranged from threepence to half-a-crown.

In the time of Elizabeth, and the custom existed for a long time after, it was customary with the actors to fall on their knees at the close of the performance, and to ask from the Almighty health and happiness for their Most Gracious Queen. After this prayer a farce was played by the clown.

The library of a theatre was its most precious possession. Each company bought and kept with jealous care the manuscripts, which became its exclusive property from the moment when the

author had obtained the right to have them printed.

At the outset there was no question of printing the plays; but the authors gradually began to watch the publication of their works, which originally were worth sixpence a copy. Before 1600 the best plays were never paid more than £8 sterling by the managers of the theatres. It is known, for instance, that Greene's *Historie of Orlando Furioso*, which appeared in 1594, and was a translation from Ariosto, was paid only £9 sterling. Ben Jonson, however, sent up the prices, which henceforth were £10. Often a needy author would borrow a little money upon his future pieces, and the manager in this way trafficked in money-lending, and even usury.

Sometimes the writers were taken on as yearly purveyors, and received so much on the receipts of the theatre. Generally several authors composed a play together, applying to their works the principle of the division of labour. Mediocre poets, or persons of quality who thirsted for popularity, would even pay the managers to get their comedies or dramas played in the theatres.

As was said above, the authors frequently combined this trade with that of manager and actor, as did Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Heywood, etc.

Women never appeared on the stage. Adults filled the parts of Lady Macbeth, Desdemona, and Juliet. For the more delicate women's parts,

recourse was had to the services of young boys, who were remunerated in proportion to their beauty and distinction. When their voices began to break they were given ordinary parts.

At the outset of the Romantic Drama the plays were executed entirely by boys. The choristers of the cathedrals, the 'children of the Queen's Chapel,' and the 'children of Windsor,' were at the same time actors, and played in the public theatres. This last item explains the action of the choristers of St. Paul's in wishing to obtain the monopoly in representing Sacred Drama. The 'children' of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel, called after 1603 the 'children of Her Majesty's Revels,' played also at the theatre of Blackfriars, and had the monopoly of the best works of the time, including two or three plays of Ben Jonson. It was only in 1626 that the combination of actor and chorister was forbidden. The 'children of Blackfriars' were very popular, and their acting was even held superior to that of the other adult companies. Shakespeare's company *per contra* was entirely composed of men.

In the reign of Elizabeth there were admirable actors, and this perfection is due in great measure to the dramatic education which the players had received from childhood. They were habitually shareholders in the theatre to which they were attached, but along with them were actors at regular wages, who had no further interest in the affair. Children of ten often served an apprenticeship, and the manager apportioned the result of

their labour. The companies were well paid for the performances given at Court, or sometimes in the houses of great nobles. From time to time the companies travelled in the provinces, stopped at different places, or acted in the open air, or halls of the baronial castles.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the actors set the tone of London society, and the young elegants endeavoured to copy comedians such as Burbage, Alleyn, and Tarlton; nevertheless a certain discredit still attached to the trade of actor, and even of dramatic author.

The fast world formed the ordinary public of the theatrical representations. A respectable young girl could hardly venture to go there. It was also held that a modest wife should shun the play-houses. The theatre was the occasion of a great display of dress. Cloaks were worn that must have cost at least £40 to £50, and magnificent laces were also displayed.

Though performed in the suburbs and low parts of the town, and somewhat contemptuously protected by the Court while it was subject to attacks from the City, the Romantic Drama attained the highest destinies; and it must be confessed, that in thus triumphing over every disadvantage, it proved the spirit of the nation at this epoch to be essentially dramatic.

8. Shakespeare's Successors

Ben Jonson—His life—His comedies, and their character: *Every Man in His Humour*, *Volpone*, *Epicoene*, *The Alchemist*—Ben Jonson's tragedies: their character—His masks and anti-masks—Influence of his comedies and tragedies upon the development of the theatre—Influence of his masks upon the Drama of the Restoration—Chapman; the beginnings of his career—Tragedies from the History of France—His comedies: *All Fooles*, *Eastward Hoe*—Beaumont and Fletcher—Nature of their collaboration—Their tragedies and comedies: *Wit without Money*, *The Knight of Malta*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*—Principal comedies of manners—Idiosyncrasies in the respective styles of Beaumont and Fletcher—Principal types—Authors of the second order—Thomas Dekker and his comedies of manners—Webster and the Melodrama—Marston and the Realistic Theatre—Middleton and his comedies of manners—*A Game at Chess*, and political comedy—Thomas Heywood and his chronicle plays—*A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse*, and the first domestic tragedy—Samuel Daniel and the pastoral drama—Samuel Rowley and the chronicle play—Massinger and the religious drama—His comedies—John Ford and the chronicle play—James Shirley and his remarkable comedies of manners—Richard Brome and his comedies of manners—D'Avenant and the comedy of intrigue—The different writers of masks—Milton's *Comus*—The academic plays.

Ben Jonson.—Of all the dramatists of the Elizabethan Age, Ben Jonson, in virtue of his talent, takes first rank after Marlowe and Shakespeare. This author, the son of an English minister, was born in 1573, at Westminster. His first studies were at that famous school, whence he passed on to the University of Cambridge, but apparently remained there only a few weeks. Nevertheless, he subsequently obtained his Master of Arts degree. He went home to his stepfather's trade (his mother had been married again to a master bricklayer), but soon escaped to enter the army. In 1597 he engaged as actor in Henslowe's company, which by the end of the seventeenth century had settled definitely at the Fortune Theatre, in Golding

Lane. In 1598 he began to write for the stage, and his first piece, *Every Man in His Humour*, was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's servants. Shakespeare's company, and Shakespeare himself, took a part in it. Ben Jonson's dramatic career was shortly afterwards interrupted by an 'unfortunate accident.' After a quarrel with an actor named Gabriel Spenser, the latter was killed in a duel, and Jonson was thrown into prison. He was converted to the Catholic faith, and 'thereafter was for twelve years a Papist.'

He had doubtless regained his liberty by 1599, the date at which his comedy, *Every Man in His Humour*, was acted before the Queen. It was on this occasion that he composed his 'Epilogue at the Presentation before Queen Elizabeth.'

In 1601 Jonson published his comedy, *Poetaster*, an attack against Dekker and Marston, to which Dekker replied in 1602 by another satirical comedy, *Satiromastix, or The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet.* This quarrel annoyed Jonson so much that he abandoned Comedy to seek a diversion in the serener sphere of Tragedy, and in 1603 his drama of *Sejanus* was produced at the Globe, Shakespeare again taking a part in the performance. At this date Queen Elizabeth died, and some splendid feasts were organised at the Court in honour of the accession of James I., as well as at the houses of some of the nobility. Ben Jonson set to work to compose Masks for the occasion. *The Satyr*, written for Sir Robert Spencer of Althorp, was the first of a long series of similar productions. On

Twelfth Night, 1605, the *Masque of Blackness* was 'personated by the most magnificent of Queens, Anne of Great Britain, with her honourable Ladyes' at Whitehall. By 1604, however, Jonson had come back to his favourite vein of Comedy. In this year he wrote, in collaboration with Marston and Chapman, *Eastward Hoe*, which caused him various annoyances, for at the instigation of Sir James Murray, a Scottish gentleman, who thought his country insulted by the piece, the King arrested Chapman and Marston. Ben Jonson, to back up his friends, claimed to share their penalties by voluntary imprisonment. They were soon released, and it was in the course of the ten years that followed that he composed his best works. In the interval he fulfilled the duties of tutor to one of Sir Walter Raleigh's sons, and spent some time with him in Paris, where he became acquainted with Cardinal de Perron. At this period Ben Jonson seems to have taken a dislike to the career of dramatist, for he produced nothing between 1616 and 1625. In 1618 he journeyed on foot to Scotland, and was for some weeks the guest of the celebrated Scottish poet, William Drummond. Of this visit Drummond has preserved an interesting record in his *Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations.*

In 1625 the unfortunate state of his affairs obliged Jonson to set to work again. In 1626 he composed his mask, *The Fortunate Isles*; and in 1634 another work of the same order, *Love's Welcome,* which must have been his last dramatic composition. He died in 1637. Among his papers

was found a pastoral drama of great beauty, *The Sad Shepherd*, which is unfortunately unfinished. All the authors of the period agree in allotting to Ben Jonson the first place among contemporary poets after the death of Shakespeare. Like Racine and Goethe, at a later date, Ben Jonson was in the habit of first writing his pieces in prose, and afterwards transcribing them into verse.

Ben Jonson is primarily distinguished as a writer of Comedies. The first and undoubtedly the finest of his pieces is *Every Man in His Humour*, of which we have already spoken, and which occupies a place in the history of the English Theatre, of so much the more importance in that it is the first Comedy of Character, properly so-called.

It contains portraits of the bragging soldier and the usurer, which are types worthy of being handed down to posterity. This play was acted with great success during the period of the Restoration, and was revived at the end of the eighteenth century by Garrick, who interpreted the part of usurer with incomparable talent. *Every Man out of His Humour*, which dates from 1599, is, besides being a comedy of character, an interesting study of manners. The author endeavours to show that 'humour,' that is, the freaks of our nature, finds its cure in its own excesses. The play is, moreover, a biting satire on the customs of the period.

Volpone, or The Fox, written in 1505, and of more modest pretensions, is directed against hypocrisy. It is also a striking picture of the depraved manners of the day.

Epicoene, or The Silent Woman, written 1609, is held to be the finest of Jonson's pieces, from the point of view of its unrivalled comedy. It relates the story of an old misanthrope, who in his horror of noise marries a woman whom he believes to be silent. She proves, however, to be a talkative creature, and eventually turns out to be a boy. This comedy was revived by Garrick in 1776.

The Alchemist, 1610, was written with the object of unmasking a crowd of impostors, who, at this period, traded shamefully upon human credulity.

By ruining the credit of these exploiters Ben Jonson rendered a signal service to society. The play is quite the best of his works from the point of view of excellence of construction, and strength of conception. It contains violent attacks upon the Puritans.

Bartholomew Fair is an interesting picture of London life towards 1614, the date at which this comedy was written. It was, moreover, a witty criticism on the Puritans, who posed as enemies of the theatre. From these different points of view *Bartholomew Fair* constitutes a valuable documentary witness to the history of English manners in the seventeenth century.

The Devil is an Ass, 1616, is rather a weak composition, but interesting in the sense that it takes us back to the time of the Mysteries and Moral Plays by the introduction of such characters as Satan, and Iniquity the Vice.

The Staple of News, 1625, is an allegorical play

in which the author was inspired by the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, as well as by the *Wasps* of the great Greek comedian.

The New Inn, *The Magnetic Lady*, *A Tale of a Tub*, his last works, were unfortunate.

The only two Tragedies composed by Ben Jonson—*Sejanus*, *His Fall*, 1603, and *Catiline*, *His Conspiracy*, 1611—were both taken from Roman history. Unfortunately, they are so freighted with quotations from the classics, that they rather fall into the department of literature than form part of the history of the stage. They appeal more particularly to students and to men of letters. Ben Jonson's very considerable acquaintance with the literature of the ancients, in fact, gives to these two tragedies an incontestable authority.

Ben Jonson is no less celebrated for his Masks than for his Comedies. Of these he composed a great number, taken partly from history and partly from legendary sources. He also wrote several Anti-Masks, that is, a parody of what was to follow, or, according to Schlegel's definition, 'an antidote to the excess of sweetness with which the flattery continued in the mask itself might be liable to clog the audience.'

Ben Jonson, having been in succession student, tradesman, soldier, actor, organiser of amusements in the fashionable world as well as at the Court, was particularly fitted to study the lowest and the highest society of his time, and was thus enabled to create types as numerous as they were varied. His tipplers, soldiers of fortune, dupes,

impostors, court ladies, fashionables, form an incomparable picture of the manners of the period.

His Comedies mark a great advance in this particular line; they show a tendency, very pronounced from this time onwards, to subordinate everything to the development of character. It is to be regretted that his plays are spoiled by his *intermezzos*, or commentaries, a multiplication of the *parabasis* of Old Athenian Comedy. Ben Jonson had a profound knowledge of French literature, and borrowed many satirical features from Erasmus and Rabelais.

In Tragedy, Ben Jonson's influence was *nil*. His two compositions rather take a step backwards, for by their abuse of rhetoric they approximate to the pseudo-classic drama of the previous age.

The grandiose setting of the Mask, from Ben Jonson onwards, developed the taste for stage decoration among the dramatists of the Restoration. The appearance on the stage of beautiful, elegant, and distinguished women called the attention of the public to the advantages to be derived from their presence in the Drama, and undoubtedly hastened the substitution of real actresses for the boys who had hitherto taken the part of women.

CHAPMAN.—Next to Shakespeare and Ben Jonson in order of merit comes George Chapman. He was born in 1557 or 1559, at Hitchin, in the county of Hertfordshire. He passed two years at Trinity College, Oxford, 'with a contempt,' says Warton, 'of Philosophy, but in close attention to the Greek and Roman classics,' and then went on to Cam-

bridge. He had a thorough knowledge of the German language, which points to his having spent some time in Germany. He died in 1634. A writer of Comedies as well as of Tragedies, Chapman is particularly deserving of attention in France, in the last style of composition. His most remarkable plays consist of a series of dramas taken from the History of France, and give an interesting picture of the manners of the Court at that period.

Bussy d'Ambois, the first of these plays, printed in 1607, is founded on the history of a poor gentleman, in whom Monsieur, the King's brother, thought he had found a docile instrument for the carrying out of his projects of vengeance against his sovereign, and for assassinating him. Eventually, however, the conspirator finds that instead of an accomplice, he has made choice of a powerful rival.

The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois, printed in 1613, which is a sort of sequel to the last play, turns on the assassination of the Duc de Guise, and the revengeful projects of Clement d'Ambois, brother of the victim.

The subject of the third drama was equally taken from the History of France, and was called *The Conspiracie and Tragedie of Charles, Duke of Byron, Marshall of France.* It was suggested by the political conduct of the famous Marshal of France.

Two other tragedies, although inferior from the dramatic point of view, are also worth mentioning. These are *Alphonsus, Emperour of Germany*, which is very curious on account of the many and inter-

esting details it gives of the manners of the Germans; and *The Revenge for Honour*, a piece which is no less curious as a picture of oriental customs.

Although the serious turn of his mind inclined him more to Tragedy than to Comedy, Chapman composed two real *chefs-d'œuvre* of comic humour. The first of these, *All Fooles*, is taken in great part from the *Heauton Timorumenos* of Terence. The play opens with a dialogue, the second part of which contains an admirable description of the joys of mutual love.

Eastward Hoe, which was mentioned above in connection with the collaboration of Ben Jonson, and which dates, like the comedy that preceded it, from 1605, is a criticism of the influence upon the lower classes of the manners of the Court. The Theatre of the period perhaps offers nothing more fundamentally droll, nor better constructed, than this play. It was adapted, in 1775, for the theatre of Drury Lane, with the title of *Old City Manners*.

It is to be regretted that Chapman's talent is not sustained throughout his works; his great reputation is in fact based more upon the beauty of certain passages than on any perfection of the whole.

Beaumont and Fletcher.—These two authors, who collaborated in a great number of plays, come next in the series of the Elizabethan dramatists.

Francis Beaumont was born at Grace-Dieu, in Leicestershire, the seat of his ancestors, in 1586, was educated at Oxford, and on leaving the University entered the Inner Temple. He died in 1615.

John Fletcher, whose father was successively Dean of Peterborough (in which capacity he attended Mary, Queen of Scots, at Fotheringay Castle, and urged her to recant the Catholic faith), Bishop of Bristol, and Bishop of London, in the reign of Elizabeth, was born in 1579, and was an undergraduate of Cambridge. He died of the plague in 1625.

In the joint works of these authors the general plan of the piece, the composition of the more serious parts, and the pathetic portions, fell to the share of Beaumont, who had acquired such a reputation for good sense that Ben Jonson himself frequently referred to him.

Fletcher was *par excellence* the man of the world, refined by the elegant society in which he constantly moved, gifted with an admirable wit, and past master in the art of dialogue, which fell to his lot. Raillery was his special *forte*, but it was so courteously worded, that the persons aimed at could hardly resent his attacks.

The most remarkable plays of Beaumont and Fletcher are :—

Philaster, or Love lies a' Bleeding; written about 1608, and dramatic to an unusual degree. The character of Philaster is an adaptation of Hamlet.

The Maid's Tragedy; performed towards the middle of the eighteenth century, with enormous success. At the commencement of the nineteenth century, Sheridan Knowles adapted it under the title of *The Bridal*, and Macready played it in 1837.

Wit without Money; this comedy, which is very merry, was in all probability the work of

Fletcher only, and was written about 1614. It owes its success to the principal character, Valentin, an original and well-drawn hero, who renounces his patrimony, and hopes to live upon his wits.

The Coxcomb; another comedy remarkable for its character-sketches, more particularly for the description of the scolding wife.

The tragedy, *The Knight of Malta*, contains one scene, the 5th of Act 1 (advice of Oriana to Miranda), which is among the noblest in Elizabethan Drama. This play is attributed to both authors.

The Two Noble Kinsmen is, in the opinion of several critics, the work of Fletcher and Shakespeare. The plot of this tragi-comedy is taken from Chaucer's *Knighte's Tale.*

The Lover's Progress, *The Sea Voyage*, are two romantic dramas by Fletcher, and perhaps Massinger and Fletcher respectively. The former is taken from a French novel, *Histoire tragi-comique de nos temps* (Daudiguier's *Lisander and Calista*). The latter was derived from the Argonautic legend, reproduced by Ariosto in *Orlando Furioso.*

The Humorous Lieutenant (Fletcher) is a tragi-comedy. The character of the lieutenant is one of Fletcher's best creations. *The Pilgrim*, *The Spanish Curate*, *A King and no King* (all by Fletcher), are also excellent comedies of intrigue and of character.

Rule a Wife and Have a Wife is undoubtedly the best of the plays written by Fletcher alone. The author was inspired by a tale of Cervantes. The subject recalls Shakespeare's *Taming of the*

Shrew, but the play is quite original. It was popular from the outset, and was played in the nineteenth century with great success. Schlegel considers it one of the best comedies ever written.

The following plays are curious as pictures of contemporary manners, and as exhibiting some of the whims of the period:—

The Woman-Hater, written towards 1606, is a fine mockery of the lust of good cheer, which was one of the scourges of the time. *The Little French Lawyer* is an exceedingly witty satire on the mania then in vogue for duelling, upon the slightest provocation. *The Island Princess*, a romantic drama, composed in 1621, is an interesting study of the strange manners and customs imported into London. *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, a posthumous work, touched doubtless by another hand, attracts us by its exact descriptions of the rage for fashionable toilettes, and the general submission to absurd and exaggerated fashions.

The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher reveal a very extensive literary acquaintance, and a profound study of the best Greek, Latin, French, and Italian authors. Spanish literature seems, moreover, to have been especially familiar ground, a good number of their plays having been borrowed from the romances of Cervantes. The plays, in fact, are constructed like most of the Spanish romances and dramas of the period. An amorous intrigue complicated by a second plot, and a parody of the principal characters and adventures, constitutes the basis of nearly all their plays. Nor should this tendency to imitation surprise us, when we remember

that at this moment the relations between England and Spain were closer than ever before.

The extraordinary popularity of these two authors was largely due to the fact that they knew how to adapt their style to the tastes and tendencies of the time. Their ideas and writings, often highly immoral, were in perfect harmony with the corruptions of the court of James I. There is, moreover, no affectation in their plays. One feels that Beaumont and Fletcher wrote as they thought, and that their scepticism was the expression of profound conviction. This is more particularly the case when they are speaking of woman, in whose virtue they have no faith, and who, according to them, is bound sooner or later to succumb, if she has the imprudence to embark on an intrigue.

Their happiest creations in the drama, properly so-called, are the tyrant, the outspoken soldier, and the devoted wife. Generally speaking, when they allude to a woman's heart, the pathetic and sentimental note creates an admirable situation.

In their comedies, the types of the humorous lieutenant and the Spanish vicar are the most successful.

The light and clever construction, the natural style, the elegant and lively dialogue, all charm us in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, and it is a matter for regret that they should be too indecent for performance.

The Authors who follow fall into the second category of Elizabethan dramatists, but they occupy none the less an important place in the annals of

the English Theatre, for their works are a mine of valuable details as to the history of the manners of the period.

Thomas Dekker, born in London about 1570, died 1640, wrote only comedies. The first and best of his plays is *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, which appeared in 1599, and abounds in details, as curious as they are amusing, of the customs of the London shoemakers. *The Honest Whore* and *Westward Hoe!* are somewhat offensive studies of the manners of London women at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

John Webster.—Little is known of this writer's life, but his dramatic career had begun before 1602. His most characteristic productions were *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. He piles up theatrical horrors, but has a true insight into human nature, along with great dramatic genius and considerable humour. He co-operated with many other playwrights, notably with Dekker in the comedy, *Westward Hoe!*

John Marston belongs to the 'blood and thunder' school. His comedy, *What You Will*, an adaptation of Plautus' *Amphitryo*, has a certain literary interest. He also collaborated with Ben Jonson and Chapman in their comedy of *Eastward Hoe!*

Thomas Middleton, born in London, 1570, died towards 1627, is famous as the creator of Political Comedy in England; but before distinguishing himself in this vein, he composed a 'Tragi-Coomodie called *The Witch*,' a play curious inasmuch as it includes some of the facts contained in Shake-

speare's *Macbeth*. This peculiarity gave rise to a fierce literary conflict, to determine whether Middleton was inspired by Shakespeare's masterpiece, or if the great poet were inspired by Middleton. No definite issue was arrived at. Gifted with a remarkable faculty of observation, he next wrote several comedies of manners: *Michaelmas Term*, an admirable satire on the everyday follies and vices of the age; *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, aimed at the debauches of the Cambridge undergraduates; *A Trick to catch the Old One*, in which the characters of the usurers and a disreputable lawyer are traced with a master hand. These are psychological masterpieces. *Women, Beware Women*, is remarkable for its dramatic power, and is at the same time an admirable study of character. Far more than on these, however, Middleton's reputation rests upon his comedy, *A Game at Chess*, written almost at the close of his career in 1624. In it we see the first appearance in English drama of allegorical representations of the King and other princes of the blood, *i.e.* it is the inauguration of Political Satire on the stage. The play relates to the events which occurred between 1617 and 1623, and is a direct criticism of the actions of James I., who had opened negotiations for the marriage of Charles, Prince of Wales, with the Infanta Maria, younger daughter of Philip III. of Spain.

The leading characters are: the White and Black Kings, who personify the Kings of England and Spain; the White Knight, who is Charles, Prince of Wales; and the Black Knight, Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador.

Middleton is remarkable for the excellence of his prose, no less than for his fluent versification, and for the light and easy construction of his pieces. Besides the comedies, in which he is perhaps the best delineator of the manners of his time, he composed a great number of Masks.

Thomas Heywood, who came into notice about 1598, distinguished himself in all dramatic styles, including the Pageant. Moreover, he made a speciality of writing prologues and epilogues for the plays of his associates. His tragedies, *Edward IV.*, printed 1600, and *If You know not Me, You know no Bodie, or The Troubles of Queene Elizabeth*, were mentioned above, as occupying an important place in the series of Chronicle Plays. Another play, *The Late Lancashire Witches*, is also interesting as a vivacious picture of English country life in the first part of the seventeenth century. It also throws daylight on the superstitious practices of the time, and exposes the nefarious influences of the sorcery with which Lancashire was infested. Heywood's best play is perhaps *A Woman kilde with Kindnesse*, which is the earliest specimen of the domestic drama in England. Heywood is the most fertile writer of his time, two hundred and twenty plays, in which he had 'either an entire hand, or at the least a main finger,' being attributed to him. Nevertheless, his works show much care in their composition, and their general tone is very moral.

Samuel Daniel (1562-1619) left a weak tragedy of *Cleopatra* that was never acted; an epic play, *The Civil Wars between the Houses of Lancaster*

and York; an historical tragedy, *Philotas*, believed to be founded on Essex's famous plot (an assumption, however, repudiated by the author); and lastly, a famous pastoral tragi-comedy, *The Queen's Arcadia*, presented before Queen Anne at Christ Church, Oxford, 1605.

Samuel Rowley, died about 1632; the author of *When You See Me, You Know Me, or The Famous Chronicle Historie of King Henrie the Eight*, already discussed under the heading Chronicle Plays. The points of likeness between this play and Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.* aroused a violent controversy as to the relative priority of the two dramas.

Philip Massinger.—Among the late writers of Elizabethan Drama, Massinger claims an important place, though we have unfortunately little information about his life. He claims attention for three plays: *The Virgin Martyr* (performed before 1620); *The Renegado* (1624); *The Maid of Honour* (1632), all works of an essentially religious character, and probably inspired by Catholic sentiments. The first two were acted in the reign of James I. This was somewhat remarkable, when we consider the penalties to which all were exposed at this moment, who ventured openly to proclaim their allegiance to Catholic principles.

The Virgin Martyr claims the attention of historians, as it marks the return to a dramatic type which had been entirely neglected and even officially interdicted since 1584. That year witnessed the performance of the *Destruction of Jerusalem*, the last play of a religious character. Massinger's

composition, founded on the Martyrdom of Saint Dorothea, under Diocletian, is a pure Miracle Play divided into five acts. The devil appears on the stage, and the coarse character of the comic passages has quite the ring of the ancient Mysteries. *The Renegado* and *The Maid of Honour*, written in the same order of ideas as the preceding, have great dramatic power.

Massinger was no less happy in romantic drama, and has left some really fine work, as in *The Bondman*, *The Roman Actor*, and *The Great Duke of Florence*. The most famous of his comedies is *A New Way to pay Old Debts*, acted before 1633. The popularity of this play was considerable, and it long found a place in the repertory. Two other comedies, *The City Madam* and *The Fatal Dowry*, are full of interesting details—the first in regard to the excesses at table, the second to the prestige attaching to the lawyer's status.

John Ford, born 1586, wrote *The Chronicle Historie of Perkin Warbeck*, which not unworthily supplies a missing link in Shakespeare's historical dramas. This has already been referred to (*supra*, p. 210). But his two finest plays are *'Tis Pity* and *The Broken Heart*, which have a curiously modern note. As a recent critic has said,[1] "*'Tis Pity* is a piece of work so excellent, so natural in its expression, as to give distinction to any age.' In *The Broken Heart* a deep symbolism underlies the actual story, and the lyrics in the play are so graceful and tender as to rank with the gems of Shakespeare and Fletcher.

[1] *The Academy*, May 18, 1901.

Ford also collaborated with Rowley and Dekker in a domestic tragedy called *The Witch of Edmonton* (1623).

James Shirley was born in London, 1596. After going to Oxford and Cambridge, he abandoned the Anglican for the Roman church, to which he subsequently adhered. This writer, one of the most fertile England has produced, achieved a certain distinction in every style: in tragedy, comedy, romantic drama, the comedy of manners, pastoral drama, masks, even the miracle and the moral play. But it is his comedies of manners that are particularly interesting, from the information they give of the customs of the period. The most remarkable are *Hyde Park* (1632) and *The Gamester* (1633).

The first of these comedies gives a complete picture of the amusements of high life in London. The second relates to the pretensions of the middle-classes in educating their children to be gentlefolks. Garrick adapted this play in 1757, under the title of *The Gamesters*; as did Poole, in 1827, as *The Wife's Stratagem.*

St. Patrick for Ireland, another play, represented in Dublin in 1640, is a miracle play mingled with passages of intrigue, and must be regarded as the last vestige of the Miracle Play in England.

Shirley is an incomparable observer, with a wit as fine as it is original, and an extraordinary imagination.

Richard Brome is mostly known as the joint-author with Heywood of *The Late Lancashire Witches* (*supra*). He wrote some fifteen plays, in

which the old *clichés* of the country gentleman, the *parvenu*, the light woman, and others reappear. His comedy, *The Court Beggar*, perhaps the best of all his plays, is amusing; the author introduces a mask.

We only know of Brome's life that in his early youth he fulfilled the functions of servant to Ben Jonson. His plays must have been written between 1620 and 1640.

Sir William D'Avenant, who was a popular dramatist of the Restoration period, may be mentioned here as the author of *The Platonick Lovers*, 1636, and *The Wits*; two comedies of intrigue, which were highly esteemed by some critics, and were written in succession in 1636, just before the closing of the theatres.

Throughout this first part of the seventeenth century, the Mask was in high favour at Court and among the nobility. Along with Ben Jonson, who holds the palm in this kind of composition, we must cite as authors of masks, Daniel, Chapman, Marston, Beaumont, Dekker, Middleton, Anthony Munday, and Thomas Campion.

In the reign of Charles I., Shirley, D'Avenant, and Thomas Nabbes were also known for their masks, but the most perfect specimen of the type is *Comus* (1634), the work of the great poet Milton, performed at Ludlow Castle in September 1634. Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, on the other hand, was never intended for the stage. He prefaces it with the well-known remarks on '*that sort of Dramatic Poem which is called Tragedy.*' Handel composed the music to its setting as an oratorio.

As in the previous century, and along with the

Drama, Latin plays were acted in the Universities. Two of these academical plays are celebrated in the history of the English Theatre. The first, *Ignoramus*, was composed by George Ruggle. It is an imitation of the Italian comedy, *La Trappolaria*, by G. Portia, in its turn taken from the *Pseudolus* of Plautus, though mixed with modern elements, after the fashion of the Italian comedy of the day. *Ignoramus* was acted with success before King James at Cambridge in 1615, in Trinity College Hall.

The second play (also an original Latin comedy) is the *Naufragium Joculare* of Abraham Cowley; it was performed in 1638 at Cambridge.

9. Historical Aspects of the Period (from Ben Jonson to D'Avenant)

Desuetude of the Chronicle Play—Fertility of dramatic authors—Different dramatic types—Historical Tragedy, Heroic Tragedy, Domestic Tragedy, the Mask, the Pastoral Drama—The Comedy of Character—The Comedy of Manners: causes of its development—Its principal types—Sympathies of writers with French Literature—Influence of Spanish Literature—Morality of the Plays—Slight amelioration in the staging after Shakespeare—Adults upon the stage—French actresses in London between 1629 and 1635—Prologues and Epilogues of the Plays.

The two things which reveal a somewhat different state of mind in the dramatists of this, as compared with those of the preceding period, are in the first place (with a few exceptions) the abandonment of the Chronicle Play, and the almost total absence of allusions to the person of the Sovereign, as well as to the political events of the time. This is remarkable when we recall the admirable masterpieces with which Shakespeare, and Marlowe before him,

had enriched the series of Chronicle Plays, and the spirit of loyalty that breathes from many of their works. The fact arises, no doubt, in the circumstance that there was nothing in the person, character, or acts of James I. to inflame the imagination of the playwrights. Nor, on the other hand, must it be forgotten that, with the commencement of this monarch's reign, the companies of actors which till now had been attached to the service of the great nobles, were placed under the direct patronage of the Crown, and protected by it from the attacks of the Puritans. This moral and material support from the King and Court explains the absence of all invective or satire in the plays of the period.

The dramatic authors of the first half of the seventeenth century essayed themselves in every style, and their fertility is almost inconceivable. William Prynne, the famous Puritan author of the *Histriomastix, the Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragaedie*, an attack on the Theatre, published in 1632, for which the unfortunate author was pilloried, tells us in fact that more than 40,000 plays were printed between 1630 and 1632.

Historical Drama, though relegated to the second place, flickered up with Ben Jonson and Chapman, who attempted to revive it—the former by his Roman tragedies, the second by his plays on the history of France—but with very mediocre success.

The Chronicle Plays found bolder representatives in the younger Heywood, in Samuel Rowley, and

in Ford, who more nearly approximate to the style of Shakespeare; but the effort was sterile.

Heroic Tragedy dominated all other types during the first part of the seventeenth century, and was generally derived from Italian, Spanish, and French fiction. It exhibited great poverty in its choice of motives, but approved itself by the lightness of its constructions.

A third form of the drama is the Domestic Tragedy, that is, the presentment of the episodes and events of everyday life. This style, inaugurated by Thomas Heywood, was continued by Middleton, Marston, Webster, Fletcher, Ford, and Shirley. Unhappily, all the plays in this category err in their absence of originality and in a certain uniformity of character, which makes the reading of them wearisome. The motives, in effect, are always the same; poetical ambition, conjugal jealousy, feminine devotion, unregulated passion, constitute the basis. Webster, Ford, and Shirley, however, introduced a note of sentimentality, and thereby created situations as touching as they were original.

The Mask attained its highest degree of perfection and splendour in the reigns of James I. and Charles I., thanks to the talent of Ben Jonson, Marston, Beaumont, T. Heywood, Chapman, Ford, and Shirley. Under the Stuarts, the average expense of a mask was about £1400 sterling.

The sole representatives of the Pastoral Play were Ben Jonson, with his *Sad Shepherd* (unhappily not finished); Samuel Daniel, with *The Queen's Arcadia*; and *The Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher.

The Comedy of Character, created by Shakespeare, was carried to a high degree of excellence by Ben Jonson. Bobadil (the military braggart), Kitely (the jealous usurer), in *Every Man in His Humour*; Macilente (the envious man), Carlo Buffone (the cynic), in *Every Man out of His Humour*; Volpone (the hypocrite); Morose (the misanthrope), in *Epicoene*, are characters traced by a master hand. The comedy, *All Fooles*, by Chapman, is another good specimen of the comedy of character.

Above all, however, it is in the Comedy of Manners that the successors of Ben Jonson found their vein. They brought to fruition the heritage that this writer himself had left them in that style, and as a picture of the follies and foibles of the epoch, the comedies of Dekker, Chapman, Middleton, Fletcher, and Shirley are most remarkable.

In this development, it is to be remarked that the interests of social life, which in previous reigns had been distributed in the different centres of the kingdom, were concentrated entirely in the capital after the accession of James I.

The desertion of country for town, which had already begun in the reign of Elizabeth, was steadily increasing in the time of James I. and Charles I. London became the focus of art and literature, the centre of magnificence and pleasure, but of idleness and dissipation also: and a favourite theme of the writers of the period is the contrast between the city life and country life.

The social types most ridiculed by the comedians are: the half-ruined country gentleman who be-

comes the prey of usurers, the *parvenus*, the newly created knights (Shirley's particular object of derision), the epicurean, the drunkard, the fop, the sporting man who ruins himself on the turf, the duellist, the dry sticks at the university, the lawyer, the doctor, the clergyman, who are all studies dear to the dramatist of the period.

In many of the plays the authors seek to make capital out of their acquaintance with the French language. This originated in the marriage of Charles I. and Henrietta Maria of France—a union which had bound the two nations very closely together. Still it is certain that no foreign literature, during this first part of the seventeenth century, exercised any serious influence on the progress of the English Drama. There are indeed marked relations between it and the Spanish Drama. Several authors—Beaumont, Fletcher, Middleton, and still more Webster—were inspired by suggestions from the plays of Lope de Vega and Calderon, as well as by the romances of Cervantes, in their dramatic compositions. Yet these borrowings amounted only to questions of detail; and if the Spanish authors furnished numerous plots, incidents, and situations, they did not endow the English Theatre with a single type in comedy, or one important tragic character. The Italian influence is more pronounced, but only in the so-called 'academic plays,' which were addressed to the members of the literary societies.

In the reign of James I., religious scepticism was in vogue at the Court, as well as in society, and

the pursuit of the domestic virtues was held to be a very vulgar affair. The Theatre naturally betrays this state of feeling. At the same time, granting a considerable number of coarse and indelicate plays, there are few that systematically advocate depravity and cry down virtue. For the rest, the example of morality given by Charles I. and his queen, Henrietta Maria, exerted a happy influence upon the spirit of the nation, which could but reflect on the Drama. In the last years of this reign there are evident signs of reaction, more particularly in the plays of Shirley, several of whose pieces are full of elevated sentiments. On the other hand, William Prynne, the famous Puritan writer, had in 1632 published his *Histriomastix*, an attack on the Theatre, which aimed at showing the Drama to be an illegal thing, harmful to morality, and condemned by the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, modern religious writers, and even the wisest of the pagan philosophers. This diatribe also contributed to improve the moral tone of the plays produced during the last few years that preceded the closing of the theatres in 1642.

The staging, which we have seen to be practically *nil* in the time of Shakespeare, began by the end of James I.'s reign to show steady progress. Instead, for instance, of the permanent sheets painted with coarse landscapes, a few timid changes of scene were now attempted, of a character more or less appropriate to the place of action. The female parts were still filled by boys, notwithstanding the immorality of many scenes. Some French

actresses ventured to appear on the stage at Blackfriars in 1629, but they were received with such a storm of hisses that the experiment was not renewed in public. Collier, however, says that on February 15, 1635, some French actors and actresses played *Mélise* and *Le Mystère de la Passion*, under the special patronage of the Queen. On April 16 of the same year, a French company played *Alcimedor* with great success. On May 5, and the following days, the celebrated actor, Floridor, and his troupe acted three French plays. On December 21, 1635, the French ladies of the Queen's suite gave a performance at Whitehall of the pastoral *Florimène*, in French.

Most of the plays of this period were dedicated to some great personage, and the remuneration offered to the author under these conditions was forty shillings, as established by custom.

In addition to prologues, the plays contained epilogues destined to win the good graces of the audience, or to assure the spectator of the perfect morality of the work. It is only with Dryden that the prologue takes a more elevated tone.

10. The Old Romantic Drama after the Restoration

From 1663 to 1700—From 1700 to 1750—From 1750 to 1800—From 1800 to 1830—Phelps and the theatre of Sadler's Wells—Elizabethan Drama and the old Romantic Drama.

Between 1663 and 1700 there were revivals of twenty-four plays of the old repertory, including more particularly *Catilina*, *The Devil is an Ass*,

Every Man in His Humour, *Every Man out of His Humour*, by Ben Jonson; *The Duchess of Malfi*, by Webster; Beaumont and Fletcher's *Coxcomb*; Chapman's *Bussy d'Ambois*; Shirley's *Court Secret*; Massinger's *Virgin Martyr*.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the plays most frequently given were *The Late Lancashire Witches*, by Thomas Heywood; Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*, *Epicoene*, *Volpone*, and *Bartholomew Fair*; Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*; *The Sea-Voyage*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Philaster*, by Beaumont and Fletcher; *The Duke of Guise* and *The Gamester*, by Shirley; Milton's *Comus*.

After 1750 the neglect of the old repertory was very marked, and in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the only early plays that enjoyed any popularity were *Every Man in His Humour*, and *The Alchemist*, Ben Jonson; Milton's *Comus*; *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, by Fletcher; *The Gamester*, by Shirley.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, *A New Way to pay Old Debts*, Massinger; *Every Man in His Humour*, Ben Jonson; *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, Fletcher; *The Gamester*, Shirley; and Milton's *Comus*, obtained a few performances, the rarity of which testifies to the imminent and final abandonment of the Elizabethan Drama. By 1830, in short, it had practically disappeared from the playbills.[1]

Thanks to the exertions of the excellent actor,

[1] *Some Account of the English Stage* (1660 *to* 1830), 10 vols.: P. Genest.

Phelps, manager of the theatre at Sadler's Wells, there was a definite revival of the Old English Drama after 1844. The little Islington theatre gave performances of Massinger's *City Madam* (1844); Shirley's *Gamester* (1845); Massinger's *Fatal Dowry* (1845), and *A New Way to pay Old Debts* (1846); *A King and No King*, Beaumont and Fletcher (1846); *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, Fletcher (1849); *The Duchess of Malfi*, Webster (1850).

After the death of Phelps, Shakespearean plays alone survived of the Old English Drama on the public stage of Great Britain. Laudable efforts have, however, been made in recent years to revive the ashes of Elizabethan Drama. A society was formed in London to give representations by subscription of some of the tragedies of the old repertory, presenting them as far as possible with the *mise en scène* of Shakespeare's time.

The Elizabethan Stage Society has given performances, at St. George's Hall and elsewhere, of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*; Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*; Ford's *Broken Heart*; *The Spanish Gypsy*, by Middleton and Rowley; *The Sad Shepherd*, Ben Jonson; and Milton's *Samson Agonistes* (April 1900). At the present moment these are the sole vestiges of the Romantic Drama in England, outside the limits of the Shakespearean repertory.

XI

GENERAL *APERÇU* OF THE THEATRE IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND BETWEEN 1640 AND 1900

In France

Inspired by the spirit of the heroic Spanish Drama, and the 'rules' of Ancient Poetry, Corneille with *Le Cid* (performed 1636) decided the fate of Classical Tragedy, which was henceforth to reign paramount on the French Stage for a period of two centuries. We have already seen that Hardy's company, established at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, found, from 1629, a formidable competitor in the Prince of Orange's actors, who came at that date to take possession of the Hôtel d'Argent (the Théâtre du Marais), where there had already been performances of Corneille's first play *Mélite*. *Le Cid*, one of the finest tragedies of the French Theatre, was followed by other admirable works, among others *Horace*, *Cinna*, *Polyeucte*, *Rodogune*, *Nicomède*, as well as a comedy in verse, *Le Menteur* (1644); all plays of Corneille, which have remained in the repertory of the Comédie-Française from that period, and still obtain a certain number of performances every year. The Theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne (which had the honour

of producing *Le Cid* and *Horace*), along with that of the Marais, were rivals in the public favour, when in 1650, Molière, an excellent actor as well as an admirable author, brought his company to occupy a third playhouse, *L'Illustre Théâtre*, which he shortly after abandoned for the provinces. After ten years' absence, however, he returned to Paris, and established himself definitely at the Palais-Royal, with authorisation for his company to assume the name of 'Troupe du Roi.' Accordingly, in 1660, there were three great public theatres in Paris: the Hôtel de Bourgogne, which had the monopoly of Corneille's plays; the Théâtre du Marais, which was shortly after to bring out Racine; and lastly, the Palais-Royal, where Molière of course represented his own pieces.

Molière's works, in number thirty (written between 1655 and 1672), fall into three categories: comedies of character, comedies of intrigue, and farces. The most famous are, *Le Misanthrope*, *Tartufe*, *Les Femmes Savantes*, *L'Avare*, *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*. These plays are still acted, and still obtain the same success with the audiences of the Comédie-Française.

Corneille depicted men as they ought to be; Racine described them as they are, the prey to every human passion. Feminine weaknesses, of which he made a particular study, also play a considerable part in his works. His plays, written between 1664 and 1691, include among other compositions three tragedies borrowed from the

Greek legends: *Andromaque*, *Iphigénie*, *Phèdre*; four taken from history, *Britannicus*, *Bérénice*, *Mithridate*; two from the Old Testament, *Esther* and *Athalie*, with choruses on the model of ancient tragedy; and lastly, a comedy, *Les Plaideurs*. Like the plays of Corneille, all these pieces find admirable interpretation in the present day from Mounet-Sully, Silvain, Albert Lambert, Paul Mounet, Coquelin, de Feraudy, Leloir, Berr, Boucher; and Mesdames Bartet, du Minil, Amel, Lerou, Moréno, Thérèse Kolb,—who take the principal parts in the classical repertory.

After the death of Molière, in 1673, the theatre of the Palais-Royal was suppressed: part of his company amalgamated with that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, part fused with the actors of the Marais theatre, who left that house for the Hôtel Guénégaud, close to the Pont-Neuf. When, however, in 1680, Louis XIV. decreed that one company of actors should suffice for the amusements of the Court and city, the Hôtel de Bourgogne in its turn disappeared, and there remained only one theatre, that of the Rue Guénégaud, whose company had fused with the rival theatre to form the Comédie-Française. In 1687 the new company of the Comédie-Française was turned out of the Hôtel Guénégaud, and after wandering for a couple of years, settled finally in a Hôtel in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Germain-des-Prés, where it remained until 1770.

The tragedies of Corneille and Racine completely eclipsed those of other contemporary dramatic authors; nevertheless Thomas Corneille, the

brother of the great poet, occupies a place in the annals of the classical theatre, as the author of *Timocrate* and of the *Comte d'Essex.* Tristan l'Hermite, again, was the celebrated author of *Marianne*, a tragedy performed at the Odéon, in 1897, with great success.

In Comedy we must place, along with the works of Molière, several plays of great value, such as *Jodelet ou le Maître Valet*, *Don Japhet d'Arménie*, by Scarron, Molière's predecessor in tragedy; *Crispin Médecin*, by d'Hauteroche; *Le Mercure Galant*, by Boursault; *L'Homme à Bonne Fortune*, by Baron, all plays inscribed in the repertory of the two first French theatres.

The most distinguished actors of the seventeenth century were Floridor (a gentleman by birth), who filled the principal parts in the plays of Corneille and Racine; and François Baron, who illuminated the character of Cinna, and distinguished himself equally in the dramas of Rotrou and Molière, and was ably seconded by the great tragic actress, Madame Champmeslé.

It is to be noted that the delivery of the actors was particularly studied and pompous at this period. The curtain went up at four or five in the afternoon, and the company went to the theatre before their third meal. Court dress was the rule for modern subjects, the Roman toga for ancient parts. As to the women, they were content to follow the fashion pretty accurately in their theatrical costumes.

The Classical Tragedy of the eighteenth century, which was very inferior to that of the century pre-

ceding it, had as its first representatives Crébillon, only one of whose plays, *Rhadamiste et Zénobie*, (1711) remains in the *répertoire*, and Voltaire, who occupies the first place after Corneille and Racine.

Corneille excited admiration by his paintings of heroism, Racine by depicting the passions. Voltaire undertook to rejuvenate tragedy, seeking his effects in the most pathetic situations. His finest pieces, *Zaïre* (1732), *Mérope* (1743), *La Mort de César*, are still given at the Comédie-Française and the Odéon.

To Voltaire we owe certain reforms in costume and a modification of the delivery, which from being declamatory in the seventeenth century, became simple and natural in the mouths of actors like Lekain and Mlle. Clairon.

Ducis also tried to rejuvenate Tragedy by finding inspiration in Shakespeare's drama. He cut down *Hamlet* (1769), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, to the exigencies of the 'rule of the three unities,' but the plot of these different essays was imperfect, and they have fallen into oblivion.

Diderot in his turn undertook to revolutionise the Theatre and to create the 'Bourgeois Drame,' but he failed in the attempt; and it was Sedaine to whom belongs the honour of having inaugurated the new type, with the *Le Philosophe Sans Le Savoir* (1765) and *La Gageure Imprévue*, plays which are in the repertory of the Comédie-Française.

The Comedy of the eighteenth century is infinitely superior to its Tragedy, and finds splendid

illustration in Regnard, Dancourt, Lesage, Marivaux, Destouches, Piron, Beaumarchais.

Regnard, who belongs to the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, is considered the best comic author after Molière. He carried the Comedy of Intrigue to a high degree of perfection in *Le Joueur* (1696), *Le Légataire Universel* (1708), *Les Ménechmes*, *Le Distrait*, *Les Folies Amoureuses*, plays that still appear with success at the two great theatres.

Dancourt and Marivaux are distinguished in Light Comedy. The former wrote *La Maison de Campagne*, *Les Eaux de Bourbon*; the latter *Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard* (1730), *Les Fausses Confidences*, *Arlequin poli par l'Amour*.

Lesage left a Comedy of Character, *Turcaret* (1709), which is a masterpiece. Destouches fell into the same vein in *Le Curieux Impertinent*, *L'Ingrat*, *Les Philosophes Amoureux* (1730). Lastly, Piron's *Métromanie* and Gresset's *Le Méchant* complete the list of comedies prior to the Revolution that still achieve great success on the stage of the national theatres.

It was, however, Beaumarchais, the precursor of the modern theatre, who, after Molière and Regnard, gave new brilliancy to the 'Haute Comédie,' by *Le Barbier de Séville* (1775) and *Le Mariage de Figaro* (1784), two masterpieces of fine gaiety and cruel irony, which are still very successful at the Comédie-Française and the Odéon.

Besides Joseph Chénier, whose *Charles IX.* is regarded as the first French National Tragedy, the

Revolution only produced one great dramatist: Népomucène Lemercier, the most original author in the history of the Theatre between 1789 and 1830. To him we owe *Pinto, ou la Journée d'une Conspiration*, the play which in 1799 created Historical Comedy; and in 1809 another drama, *Christophe Colomb*, which battered down the 'rule of the three unities.' Népomucène Lemercier also gave, in 1797, an excellent translation of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus.

As we saw above, the costumes of the actors had no historical accuracy in the seventeenth century, and this continued into the middle of the eighteenth century. For although in the regency of the Duc d'Orléans there had been some attempts at local colour on the stage, on the suggestion of Mlle. Adrienne Lecouvreur, Voltaire was, nevertheless, the first, in 1755, to give it an official recognition in the staging of his tragedy *L'Orphelin de la Chine*. A little later on, Beaumarchais still further accentuated this reform in costume; but it was only fully effectuated in the nineteenth century, thanks to the efforts of the great actor Talma. The abolition of spectators from the stage took place in 1759, and it then became possible to give more amplitude to the *mise en scène*, by augmenting the number of actors and introducing changes of scene.

In 1770, the Comédie-Française abandoned the Hôtel de la Rue Guénégaud, where it had been installed for nearly a century, and while awaiting the completion of a magnificent theatre constructed for it on the site of the present Odéon, took up temporary quarters in a hall of the Tuileries. In this

provisory house was given the first performance of the *Barbier de Séville*, in 1775, and in 1778 the triumphal representation of Voltaire's *Irène*. In 1782, the new theatre of the Comédie-Française was inaugurated, and in 1784 the first performance of the *Mariage de Figaro* was given at this theatre. In 1789, the Comédie-Française changed its name for that of Théâtre de la Nation. Even by 1787, however, the foundations of a new theatre were being laid in the Rue Richelieu (site of the actual Comédie-Française), and it was completed in 1791. It was in this new house, the Théâtre de la République, that Talma and the Republican members of the company from the Théâtre de la Nation established themselves, while the Royalist section stayed in that house, where the *mise en scène* was already undergoing some happy modifications, such as the replacing of candles by oil-lamps. Another no less appreciable innovation was the distribution of programmes bearing the names of the artists.

In 1793 this theatre was closed, and that of the Rue Richelieu had often to shut, on account of insufficient receipts to cover the expenses. After the Terror, Paris found itself in possession of three theatres claiming the title of Comédie-Française: the Théâtre de la Nation (henceforth known as the Odéon), the Théâtre de la République (Rue Richelieu), and the Théâtre Feydeau, where comedies were played by preference.

During the disturbances in 1799 the Odéon was burned; the Théâtre Feydeau came to grief; and Talma and his company came back to the Rue

Richelieu. New financial difficulties, however, led to the closing of the theatre, and for two months the Comédie-Française ceased to exist. In this same year of 1799, however, the Odéon having been rebuilt, the company of the Comédie-Française, who had taken refuge at the Théâtre Louvois, established themselves in the new building, which received the name of deuxième Théâtre Français, and from there, on May 31, 1799, it went back to its old house in the Rue Richelieu, which was then officially called the Comédie-Française, and has been ever since.

The most celebrated actors of the Comédie-Française in the eighteenth century were Baron, whose long career terminated in 1720; his pupil, the famous tragic actress, Mlle. Adrienne Lecouvreur; Mlle. Clairon, who made her *début* in 1743, in *Phèdre*, and was the brilliant interpreter of the chief feminine characters in the plays of Voltaire. The distinguished actors, Lekain, Molé, Fréville, Mlle. Dumesnil (who immortalised the *Phèdre* of Racine), appeared in turn in the principal plays of a repertory which, even before the Revolution, numbered at least six hundred more plays than in the preceding century.

In October 1812, Napoleon, in the course of his Russian campaign, signed the famous decree at Moscow which bears this name, and treats of the final constitution of the new Comédie-Française. The edict in question was, broadly speaking, a repetition of that of Louis XIV., but the theatrical company, instead of being as before under the

control of the gentlemen of the King's bedchamber, passed under that of the Minister of Fine Arts, as represented by an Administrator-General.[1]

The Theatre of the First Empire claims honourable mention in the department of Light Comedy for the names of Andrieux, author of *Le Trésor*, and Picart, author of *La Petite Ville*, two elegant plays that remain in the repertory.

The year 1829 is an important date in the history of the theatre, for it marks the decline of Classical Tragedy, and the substitution of Romantic Drama, which is inimical to the 'unities' of time and place, and rests on the principle that 'whatever is in nature is also in art.' The movement arose with Alexandre Dumas, *père*, and Alfred de Vigny, in 1829; the former writing *Henri III. et sa Cour*, the latter *Othello*, represented in the same year. Lastly, on the 25th of February 1830, the triumph of the romantic school was assured by the success of Victor Hugo's *Hernani*, at the Comédie-Française. His other plays are *Marion Delorme*, *Le Roi s'amuse*, *Lucrèce Borgia*, *Marie Tudor*, *Ruy Blas*, *Les Burgraves* (1843). *Hernani* and *Ruy Blas* still constitute the finest masterpieces of the celebrated theatre, and particularly attract the attention of strangers. *La Maréchale d'Ancre*, *Cinq-Mars*, by Alfred de Vigny; *Les Enfants d'Édouard*, and *Louis XI.*,[2] by Casimir Delavigne,

[1] At this time, as for some years past, M. Jules Claretie occupies this important position. The company of the Comédie-Française at present includes twenty-four associates chosen from the most distinguished actors, who, independent of their fixed salaries, receive a share varying from twenty-five to thirty thousand francs per annum.

[2] This play was revived in 1898, and the part of the King, as interpreted by M. Silvain, is among his most remarkable performances.

bring to a brilliant close the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the romantic school.

The great comedian Talma (*d.* 1826) rendered illustrious the period of the Empire. Mlles. George and Mars made their *début* at the same epoch. Mlle. Mars was the star of the Comédie-Française throughout the reign of the romantic drama.

The Comedy of this period is adequately represented in *Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle* (1839), *Un Mariage sous Louis XV.* (1841), *Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr* (1843), by Alexandre Dumas, *père*: in the comedies and *proverbes* of Alfred de Musset, *Les Caprices de Marianne* (1833), *On ne Badine pas avec l'Amour*, *Le Chandelier*, *Un Caprice*, *Il faut qu'une Porte soit Ouverte ou Fermée*, *Il ne faut jurer de Rien* (1848); and lastly in the numerous works of Scribe, in particular *Valérie* (1822), *Le Verre d'eau*, *Bertrand et Raton*, *Une Chaîne*, *Bataille de Dames*, all plays that have secured frequent revivals at the Comédie-Française.

In 1843, there was another dramatic revolution. For some years past, the violent situations, dear to the romantic school, had produced a sensation of general fatigue; a reaction set in, and Ponsard (whose plays are a compromise between classical tragedy and the romantic drama), by his *Lucrèce* (1843), contributed to the success, ephemeral though it was, of the new school that was somewhat vaguely called the 'école du bon sens.' His best plays are *Agnès de Méranie*, *Charlotte Corday* (1850),[1] and *Le Lion Amoureux*. *L'Honneur et*

[1] This play was revived at the Comédie-Française in April 1900, and maintained its success throughout the period of the Exhibition.

l'Argent and *La Bourse*, by the same author, are also excellent specimens of high comedy.

The admirable tragic actress Rachel occupied the stage of the Comédie-Française during the whole of this period (1838 to 1855), with an *éclat* that only Mme. Sarah Bernhardt has since achieved.

The 'école du bon sens' was almost immediately replaced by the present school, which claims to observe the situations of daily life, to analyse the sentiments of some of its actors, and to reproduce the whole on the stage, in a sufficiently realistic setting.

The illustrious representatives of Contemporary Drama are MM. Émile Augier, Alexandre Dumas, *fils*, and Victorien Sardou.

Émile Augier more particularly depicts the evils that arise from the pursuit of money. His plays are *La Ciguë* (1844), *L'Aventurière* (1848), *Le Gendre de M. Poirier*, *Maître Guérin*, *Les Effrontés*, *Gabrielle*, *Les Fourchambault* (1878), which are among the favourite pieces of the Comédie-Française.

Alexandre Dumas, *fils*, the greatest dramatic author of the second part of the nineteenth century, believed himself to be invested with an evangelical mission, and employed the theatre as a tribune whence he could deliver a course of moral lectures. In his comedies, which are mostly plays with a thesis, he exposes the evils of adultery, of seduction, of debauchery, and undertakes the rehabili-

tation of the Magdalen. Morality cannot be said to have gained by this exhibition of vice, but the author must be credited with his good intentions. His greatest successes at the Comédie-Française were and still are *Diane de Lys* (1853), *L'Étrangère* (1876), *Denise*, *Le Demi-Monde*, *L'ami des Femmes*, *M. Alphonse*, *Francillon* (1885). His first play in 1852, was *La Dame aux Camélias* (one of Sarah Bernhardt's finest creations).

M. Victorien Sardou, who is as notable for his sparkling wit and frank gaiety as for his perfection in dramatic movement, the characteristic of all his plays, occupies the second half of the nineteenth century with his innumerable compositions, the spring of which appears to be inexhaustible. He is the only contemporary author who has experimented in every style, and it should be noted that his success has been as great in the drama, properly so-called, as in the comedy of character, or the comedy of manners. His profound historical erudition permits him to revivify the past upon the stage with an exactitude and precision of detail which have earned for his two *chefs-d'œuvre*, *Patrie* and *La Haine*, a hearty reception. It must be acknowledged that M. Sardou has been marvellously seconded by artists like Mesdames Réjane, Sarah Bernhardt, and Bartet, who have given admirable interpretations, the one of his comedies, the other two of his dramas.

Nor must we omit to mention the great English actress Miss Ellen Terry, the brilliant interpreter

of Madame Sans-Gêne, and the illustrious actor Sir Henry Irving, who also impersonates the character of Robespierre with great success in London.

Among the many comedies of manners and character, or dramatic comedies by this author, we may mention *Nos Intimes* (1861), *Nos Bons Villageois*, *Les Ganaches*, *Les Vieux Garçons*, *La Famille Benoiton*, *Belle-Maman*, *Andréa* (which made its first appearance in New York), *L'Oncle Sam* (a critique of American manners), *Dora ou l'Espionne* (translated into English under the name of *Diplomacy*), *Rabagas* (a political satire), *Daniel Rochat* (a fine comedy which deals with the religious question), *Fernande*, *Madame Sans-Gêne*, an historical comedy which had a great run in England as well as in France.

Sardou's historical plays are *Patrie* (1869), which describes the Flemish revolt against the tyranny of the Duke of Alba; *La Haine*, or Italy in the fourteenth century; *Théodora*, the Byzantine Empress; *La Tosca*, or Rome after the Parthenopean republic; *Gismonda*, or Greece in the fourteenth century; *Fédora*, or the Russian Princess; *Thermidor* (1891); *Robespierre* (1899), expressly written for England.

As comedies of manners, *Pattes de Mouches* (1860) and *Divorçons* (1880) also obtained a great success.

The (satirical) Comedy of Manners also claims with pride the names of Pailleron and Meilhac.

Pailleron posed as the painter of the vagaries of high life, and more particularly ridiculed the pedants of good society. His most remarkable plays are

Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie (1881), which has always been an enormous success at the Comédie-Française, *L'Age Ingrat*, *La Souris*, and *Cabotins*.

Meilhac is more preoccupied with the external aspect of the ridiculous than attached to the satirising of caprice in itself. His best pieces are *Frou-Frou* (1869, his *chef-d'œuvre*), *Ma Cousine*, *La Boule*, *Le Réveillon*.

Théodore Barrière must also be mentioned here as the author of the play *Les Faux Bonshommes*, (1856), a charming satirical comedy. Labiche, whom we have already quoted as the successor to the Farce of the Middle Ages, is the author of *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon*, *Le Chapeau de Paille d'Italie* (1851), *Célimare le Bien-aimé*, *La Cagnotte* (1864), and other charming pieces, which are witty, but none the less bitter, satires on the eternal stupidity of human nature.

The best representatives of the modern school in High Comedy are M. Paul Hervieu, who has successfully produced *La Loi de l'Homme* (1897), *Les Tenailles*, and *La Course du Flambeau* (1901); M. Lavedan, who was no less happy in *Le Prince d'Aurec* (1892) and *Les Deux Noblesses*; M. Jules Lemaître, whose two fine plays, *Révoltée* (1889) and *Le Député Leveau*, are written in a perfect style; and lastly, M. Paul Brieux, who has already earned a separate place with his three remarkable comedies, *L'Évasion* (1896), *Robe Rouge* (1900), and *Les Remplaçantes* (1901), which seem to prognosticate for the theatre a return to the grand moral traditions of Augier's school.

Among the Realistic Plays, and plays of great psychological pretensions, may be cited *Les Corbeaux* (1882) and *La Parisienne* (works of great literary value), by Henri Becque; and *Les Fossiles*, by M. François de Curel.

The principal interpreters of modern comedy at the Comédie-Française are MM. Worms, Lambert, Leloir, Le Bargy, and Coquelin and de Féraudy in the comic vein; Mesdames Bartet, Brandès, Baretta.

The Naturalist School has bequeathed us *L'Amoureuse*, by M. Porto-Riche; *Le Torrent* and *La Doulourеuse*, by M. Donnay. The other productions of this school need hardly be mentioned here.

The Drama in Verse on its side has shone from the illustrious pens of Bornier and François Coppée, of M. Richepin and Edmond Rostand.

M. Henri de Bornier is the author of *La Fille de Roland*. This historical play, written quite in the manner of Corneille, aroused the enthusiasm of the public of the Comédie-Française at its first performance in 1875, and has not yet fatigued the attention of the Parisians, who for twenty-five years have come in crowds to applaud it annually. The latest composition of the poet, *France . . . d'abord!* another great drama stamped with the same patriotic feeling, was favourably received at the Odéon, at the beginning of 1900. M. de Bornier has written several other works of great value, including *Le Fils de l'Arétin*, which had its day of fame.

M. François Coppée has given to the Odéon three magnificent historical plays: *Severo Torelli*

(1883), *Les Jacobites*, and *Pour la Couronne*. The success of this last play has been considerable, not only in Paris but in London also, where it has been admirably interpreted in English by Forbes-Robertson. Three other plays in verse by this author have been produced at the Comédie-Française: *Le Passant*, *Le Trésor*, *Le Luthier de Crémone*, all infinitely charming.

M. Richepin, on his side, has been no less happy at the Comédie-Française with his fine plays, *Le Filibustier* (1888) and *De par le Glaive* (1892). Another composition of the same type, *Le Chemineau*, has recently achieved an enormous success at the Odéon.

M. Edmond Rostand, though still quite young, has tasted the wine of triumph, for his famous heroic drama, *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1898), is considered by the critics to mark a return to the most glorious traditions of the romantic period.

His previous works, *Les Romanesques* (1894), *La Princesse Lomtaine* (1895), and *La Samaritaine*, were also much applauded. His last play, *L'Aiglon* (1900), has both in Paris and in London won new laurels for the author and for his principal interpreter, the incomparable Sarah Bernhardt,—who is ably seconded by M. Coquelin.

In England

On September 2, 1642, a decree of the English Parliament ordered the closing of the theatres, performances being judged inconvenient in those times

of civil war. Under Cromwell's Protectorate this interdict was maintained in full rigour, the sole authorised performances being those of plays resembling the *opéra-comique*, such as *The Siege of Rhodes*, by D'Avenant. After the Restoration, this play was transformed by the author into a heroic drama, and (in 1662) was one of the first to make its appearance on the stage. As in the reign of Charles I., certain authors still sought inspiration in Spanish Tragedy, and particularly in the plays of Calderon. The best-known writer of this school is Digby, Earl of Bristol, who in 1667 composed a play called *Elvira, or The Worse not always True*. There were also a few adaptations of famous pieces of the Elizabethan period, and this class of dramatic composition was especially cultivated by D'Avenant, Dryden, and Otway. But it was the plays of Corneille, Racine, Quinault, Regnard, and the novels of La Calprenède, Georges Scudéry, Mme. de Lafayette, and the Abbé de Saint-Réal, that were more especially put under contribution, between 1662 and 1700, by the English dramatists.

The outset of the reign of Charles I. is marked by an important dramatic revolution. This was the substitution of rhymed for blank verse, which was put aside for a period of fourteen years (1664 to 1678). The author of this revolution was John Dryden, the most illustrious writer of the Restoration, whose works were composed between 1663 and 1699.

His principal plays are :—

The Rival Ladies (1664), a tragi-comedy which attempts the use of rhyme.

The Indian Queen, a heroic tragedy, written in collaboration with Sir Robert Howard.

The Indian Emperor (1665), which definitely established the use of rhymed verse.

Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen, a tragi-comedy taken from Mlle. de Scudéry's romance of *Artamène*.

Sir Martin Mar-All, or The Feigned Innocence, an adaptation of Molière's *L'Étourdi* and Quinault's *L'Amour Indiscret*.

Almanzor and Almahide, or The Conquest of Granada, a heroic comedy suggested by the *Almahide* of Mlle. de Scudéry.

Mariage à la Mode, a prose comedy that is still famous.

All for Love, or The World Well Lost (1678), a play in blank verse. The preface to this play is a sort of confession by the author of his sins in matters poetic, and a manifesto in favour of a definite return to blank verse. This proclamation of the inadequacy of rhyme decided the majority of dramatists to return to blank verse.

The Spanish Friar, a tragi-comedy of great value.

Amphitryon, a comedy imitated from Plautus and Molière, which still contains a few rhymed verses. In addition to *All for Love*, which is an adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra*; to *Truth Found too Late*, taken from *Troilus and Cressida*; and *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island*, also

imitated from Shakespeare,—Dryden made an adaptation of Ben Jonson's comedy, *Every Man out of His Humour*, under the title of *The Wild Gallant* (1663), which was his first dramatic composition.

Sir Robert Howard, who collaborated with Dryden in the tragedy of *The Indian Queen*, has also bequeathed to us an excellent comedy of manners, *The Committee* (1665); a clever caricature of the uses and customs of the period of the Protectorate.

Nathaniel Lee and Thomas Otway must be regarded as the only serious disciples of Dryden in the department of the Drama. Lee's two principal tragedies are *The Rival Queens* and *Lucius Junius Brutus* (1681), an adaptation of Mlle. de Scudéry's *Clélie*. He also composed a comedy, *The Princess of Cleve*, inspired by Mme. de Lafayette's romance of the same name.

Thomas Otway in *The Orphan* (1680), and *Venice Preserved* (1682), revived the spirit of Shakespearean Tragedy. He also composed another drama, *Titus and Berenice*, on the model of Racine's *Bérénice*; and a comedy, *The Cheats of Scapin*, taken from Molière's *Fourberies de Scapin*. Otway further plagiarised from *Romeo and Juliet*, under the title, *The History and Fall of Caius Marius*.

Thomas Southerne is again the author of a good tragedy, *The Fatal Marriage* (1694), which, with *The Orphans* and *Venice Preserved*, figures among the rare plays of the Stuart period that have remained in the repertory. It may be remarked, in passing, that English Tragedy gained nothing

from its foreign models; its writers did not understand the spirit of the classical theatre, and, as a general rule, they debased the heroic passion of Corneille and the chivalrous sentiments of Racine to the level of vulgar passion.

It was in Comedy, properly so called, that the dramatists of the Stuart age shone more particularly.

Sir George Etherege, who painted the manners of society at the close of the seventeenth century, wrote *She Wou'd, if She Cou'd*, and two other light comedies of the type that was to gain such popularity in England.

Sir Charles Sedley is the author of *The Mulberry Garden* (1668), a prose comedy adapted from Molière's *L'École des Maris*, and several other plays appreciated by his contemporaries.

John Lacy borrowed from *Le Médecin malgré Lui*, of Molière, the subject of his comedy, *The Dumb Lady, or The Farrier made Physician* (1669). His plays are coarse and realistic.

Thomas Shadwell (1640-1692) wrote some amusing, though coarse-grained, comedies of manners. One of his best pieces is *The Sullen Lovers, or The Impertinents* (1668), founded on *Les Fâcheux* of Molière.

John Crowne is the author of *The English Friar* (1689), suggested by Molière's *Tartufe*, and *The Married Beau*, the only comedy of the Restoration period that is entirely written in blank verse.

High Comedy shone with peculiar *éclat* between 1670 and 1714, thanks to the four celebrated

dramatic authors, William Congreve, William Wycherley, Sir John Vanbrugh, and George Farquhar.

William Congreve, who occupies the first place, after Dryden, among the authors of the Stuart period, wrote his best plays (comedies of intrigue) between 1693 and 1700. His comedy, *The Double-Dealer* (1693), is one of the best in dramatic literature. *The Old Bachelor*, *Love for Love*, *The Way of the World* (1700), are also remarkable works.

William Wycherley, who was famous between 1672 and 1715, pictures the corrupt manners of society at the close of the seventeenth century. His best pieces are *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1672), which somewhat resembles *L'École des Femmes* of Molière; *The Country Wife* (1673), from *L'École des Maris* and *L'École des Femmes* of that author; and *The Plain Dealer* (1674), which owes something to the *Misanthrope* of the great French comic author.

Sir John Vanbrugh is especially remarkable in the comedy of intrigue. *The Relapse* (1697) created a type, the fop, which still survives. *The Mistake* is taken in part from *Le Dépit Amoureux* of Molière; *Æsop* is a very clever adaptation of the play of that name by Boursault.

George Farquhar wrote some excellent comedies of manners between 1698 and 1707. His masterpiece was *The Beaux' Stratagem*, the prototype of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*.

The names of Colley Cibber, of Fielding, of

Mrs. Centlivre, which come next, belong to the category of light comedians, who, down to the middle of the eighteenth century, employed the theatre as a vehicle for social as well as political criticism of their day.

Of all models it is Molière who most commends himself to the comic authors of the period, and their works often aspired to the rank of comedies of character. But they understood neither the spirit nor the style of the great French comic author; and notwithstanding the many loans from his works, they never outstepped the limitations of the comedy of intrigue, or of actuality. This last type was carried to a high degree of perfection in England at the close of the seventeenth century, but the plays of that period are also distinguished by such a stamp of immorality and coarseness, that they were perforce expunged from the repertory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

With the reign of Charles II., actresses first made their appearance on the stage, and the ballet was then introduced. From the period of the Restoration, moreover, the staging underwent an appreciable development. Under the Stuarts, again, the distinction between Tragedy and Comedy became very marked, for the use of prose (contrary to the custom that had prevailed up to that time) now became constant in the department of Comedy.

At the commencement of the eighteenth century, two authors of talent pose as defenders of the

morality so grievously outraged on the stage: these are Steele and Addison.

Sir Richard Steele, the initiator of the sentimental comedy, wrote *The Lying Lover* (1703), *The Funeral, or Grief à-la-Mode*, *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), and other designedly moral plays.

Joseph Addison is the author of a once famous national tragedy, *Cato* (1713), in which, by subjecting the English Drama (that had been free and independent in its nature as well as by tradition) to the exigencies of the 'classical rules,' he signalled the end of its glorious career and its entry on the epoch of decay.

In the plays of Nicholas Rowe, however, romantic tragedy flashes up for a brief moment in the fine dramas of *Jane Shore* (1714) and *Lady Jane Grey* (1715). Rowe was the author of another play, *The Royal Convert*, which is superior to most of the tragedies of Christian Martyrdom existing in English literature.

The influence of the Restoration Comedies is perceptible, between 1768 and 1778, in the works of the two illustrious dramatists Goldsmith and Sheridan.

Oliver Goldsmith is the author of *The Good-Natured Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), plays which still remain in the repertory.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, one of the greatest names in English dramatic literature, and the heir to Congreve's genius (though not to his immorality), is the author of two immortal

comedies, *The Rivals* (1775) and *The School for Scandal* (1777), which still command the stage. With Sheridan ends the history of High Comedy, faithful to the literary traditions of the Congreves and the Wycherleys.

Between 1780 and 1820, there was not one single dramatic work deserving of the name. The new plays were mere sentimental comedies, melodramas, and farces. On the other hand, Shakespeare's plays occupied the stage triumphantly, in the hands of Kemble and Garrick, along with the comedies of Brinsley Sheridan.

At last in 1820, an Irishman named Sheridan Knowles created the social tragedy, with characters taken from Roman history. The style caught on with the public, and his principal play, *Virginius Romanus*, was acted with enormous success for nearly twenty-five years consecutively. The most important of his other plays are *The Hunchback* and *Alfred the Great*.

In 1838, the talented poet, Bulwer Lytton, inaugurated an original dramatic type, in a mixture of prose and verse, historical elements, and the realistic note, which may be designated an historical tragi-comedy.

His three principal plays, *Richelieu*, *The Lady of Lyons*, and *Money*, held the stage along with Shakespeare's tragedies, until Macready's final retirement in 1851.

After 1850, for a period of five-and-twenty

years, Shakespearean Tragedy was very generally neglected. Its place was taken, till about 1865, by a number of plays translated or adapted from second- and third-rate French plays, by Tom Taylor's historical melodrama, and Dion Boucicault's sentimental Irish productions.

A dramatic type of a more serious and elevated character reconquered the London stage between 1865 and 1885: this was the middle-class comedy of Tom Robertson. His plays, *Society* (1865), *Ours* (1866), *Caste* (1867), *School* (1869), all fine studies of observation, and moderately realistic, still take an important place in the repertory of the English theatre.

During this same period, Gilbert's comedies, which are a satire, perhaps veiled, but no less bitter, of the hypocrisies and egoisms of society, such as *The Palace of Truth* (1870), *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1871), *Engaged* (1876), *Broken Hearts* (1876), shared with Robertson's plays in the favour of the London public.

In 1875, the Poet-Laureate Tennyson, who was already weighted with the burden of years (he was then almost seventy), undertook to inspire English Drama with the spirit of Shakespearean Tragedy. His *Queen Mary* appeared in that year, and *Harold* in the year following. In 1881, he wrote *The Cup*, *The Falcon*, and his last play of *Becket*, all of which obtained a merely complimentary success.

As was said in chapter x., the distinguished actor Sir Henry Irving in 1874 inaugurated the definite revival of Shakespeare's tragedies. And

along with the Romantic Drama, Melodrama, and the ever-popular Farce, Modern Comedy has, since 1872, held its own on the boards, owing to the talent of three deserving authors: Messrs. Sydney Grundy, Henry Arthur Jones, and Pinero.

The earliest comedies of Sydney Grundy were for the most part adaptations of French plays, such as *Mammon* (1877), taken from *Montjoye*, by Octave Feuillet; *The Snowball* (1879), an adaptation of Delacour's comedy of *Oscar*; *In Honour Bound* (1880), suggested by Scribe's *Une Chaîne*.

Among his original plays the most remarkable are, *An Old Jew* (1894), in which he analyses a false situation arising out of adultery; *The New Woman* (1894), another study of manners, turning on the position of the man who marries beneath him.

Henry Arthur Jones has assumed the mission in several of his plays of unmasking the hypocrisies of the middle classes and the Puritan caste. His plays, *Saints and Sinners* (1884), *The Middleman* (1889), *Judah* (1890), *The Crusaders* (1891), *The Liars* (1897), are all interesting studies and observations of modern life, which have made and still obtain a great success.

Pinero has written the best psychological plays in England, and determined the success of this *genre* in the principal theatres in London and the provinces. His early plays, *The Squire* (1881), *The Magistrate* (1885), *The Profligate* (1889), *The Cabinet Minister*, and *Lady Bountiful*, which betray great talent for observation, were received with

applause by the public. It was, however, in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893) that Pinero expressed with most force the spirit of contemporary drama, as inspired by the school of Augier and of Dumas. The success of this comedy was remarkable, and still endures. In the opinion of the best critics, it is the most striking production of the English Theatre in the second half of the nineteenth century. Pinero has since written *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, as well as *Trelawny of the Wells* (1898), the realism of which is perhaps even more marked than it is in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.

The plays of Pinero, H. A. Jones, and Sydney Grundy are constantly reappearing on the playbills, and find admirable interpreters in George Alexander, Forbes-Robertson, Beerbohm-Tree, Wyndham, John Hare, and Martin Harvey, who are ably seconded by actresses like Mrs. Kendal and Mrs. Patrick Campbell.

The 'society play' is perhaps the most in vogue at the moment: but there are signs of revival in the direction of the romantic drama, as exemplified by the brilliant success of *Herod*, by Stephen Phillips, which Mr. Tree produced in the autumn of 1900 at Her Majesty's Theatre. This play, moreover, differs from most of its contemporaries, in that it is written throughout in blank verse.

Considerable interest has been evinced in London n the contemporaneous drama of foreign authors. Ibsen's plays were acted frequently between 1889 and 1896; while other foreign dramatists (Haupt-

mann, Sudermann, Maeterlinck, d'Annunzio, Echagaray) have been represented on the boards by the Independent Theatre, the Stage Society, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell; as well as by Madame Sarah Bernhardt, Signora Duse, and the German Companies.

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